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#76 MAY 1999

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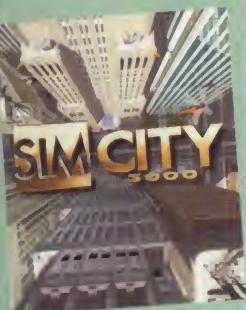
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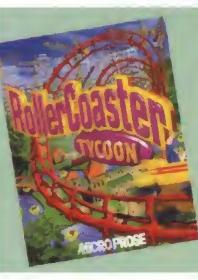
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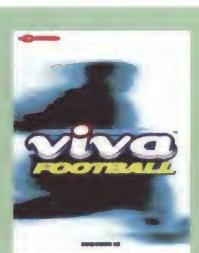
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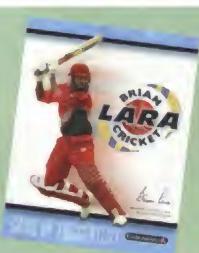
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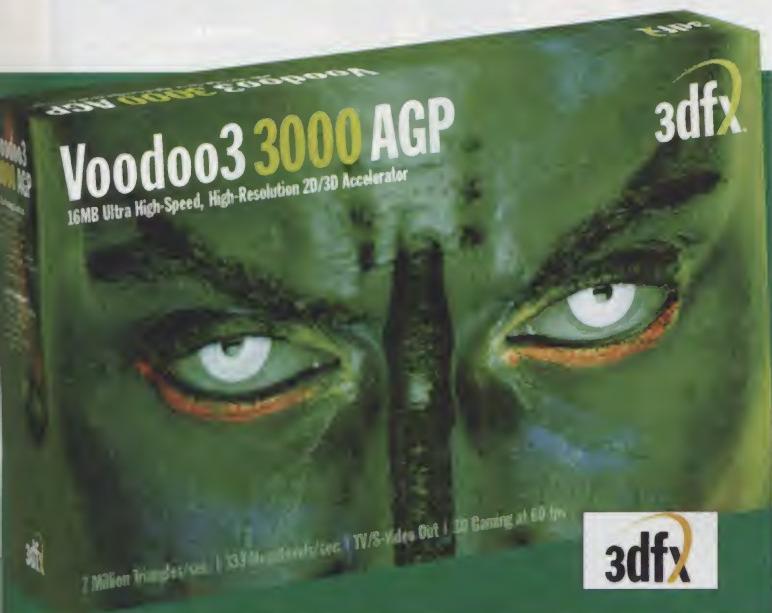


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THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

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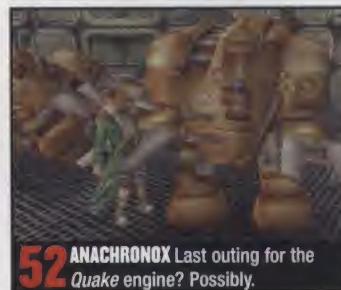


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WIN THE
TOP 10
PC GAMES
SEE THE PC ZONE CHARTS
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Quite literally the most definitive games news section in the universe

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ON THE CD**FULL DETAILS PAGE 156**

That silvery thing on the cover is loaded with great demos, patches and helpful files guaranteed to ensure you get more out of your PC

DON'T MISS DEMOS OF...

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

EXPENDABLE

TANKTICS

LANDER

THE GUARDIAN OF DARKNESS

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 1998-99

ROLLCAGE

NASCAR REVOLUTION

TOMB RAIDER III (SOUTH PACIFIC)

PLUS

Patches for Alpha Centauri, SiN, Settlers III, and lots more

Lots of useful

games utilities and...

oh, just go to page 156 and see

END ZONE

Just when you thought the mag had ended... blimey, a whole lot more!

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Get more out of the games you already own with our guide to patches

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A new section in which we ask leading developers their views on the games industry. This month: Demis Hassabis

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The ongoing story of life in the land of Black And White

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Are you 'ard enough to write in?

Online games, the great debate. See Mailbox, page 10.

**THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS**

Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: The Compo No One Finds (76), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London

W1P 7HL. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The Ed's decision is final. Closing date: Wednesday 21 April. The winner of our April (#75) cover compo was CD Hoskins from Coleford, Glos, who wins a copy of Monaco Grand Prix for correctly answering that iD Software are the development team behind Wolfenstein 3D.

THE TIME IS RIGHT, THE TIME IS NOW

Online gaming has finally come of age, and judging by the mountain of letters and countless emails we get every month relating to all things online, many of you have already discovered the pleasures of pitting your wits against a 'real' person in the game of your choice over the Internet. Whatever your favoured genre, be it the unforgiving and relentless action of a first-rate 3D shooter, the cerebral challenge of a classic real-time strategy game, or the freedom of expression granted by a role-playing game, you can find many like-minded individuals on the Internet willing to take you on 'for real'. Indeed, the game on this month's cover, *Starsiege Universe* (reviewed on page 76), is a perfect example of the future of online gaming, with its superior graphics and silky-smooth gameplay.

To the uninitiated, however, the world of online gaming must seem like a technical minefield. All this talk of ISPs and ping rates, and the bother of choosing the right modem and making sure it's running at the right speed. And then once you've got to grips with all that, trying to find the right server for the game you want to play. All these things may make the prospect of multiplayer gaming over the Internet seem more bother than it's worth.

Fear not. We'll be taking you step by step through the whole process in next month's issue (on sale Thursday 6 May) in our extensive guide to getting to grips with Internet gaming. This is all part of our new approach to online gaming. Expect regular reviews, news and previews of major new online games, and regular hints and tips on how to get the most out of the time you spend hooked

up to the Internet. And look out for a complete guide to online role-playing games in our July issue (on sale Thursday 3 June) in which we compare pending releases *Everquest*, *Asheran's Call* and *Middle Earth* to the all-conquering *Ultima Online* in our quest to find the best role-playing experience available on the Net.

Further down the line we'll be running a special Online Supertest, in which we round up the cream of the current online gaming crop, and argue the toss over which ones are most deserving of your hard-earned cash.

As ever, we welcome your views on all ZONE-related matters, and if there is a particular aspect of online gaming you'd like us to cover, write to me at the usual address and let me know, or email me at chris.pcz@pipedream.com.

See you again next month.

Chris Anderson, Editor

MEET THE ZONE TEAM

All PC ZONE's reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a reviewer who's a fan of the genre



Chris Anderson

Single-player games – are their days numbered?
There will always be room for strong single-player titles – whether publishers continue to produce them is another matter.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

No chance. The PC will be wiping the floor with PSX2 after its first year on sale.



Paul Mallinson

Single-player games – are their days numbered?
No. They will continue to prosper despite the increased interest in multiplayer gaming.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

No, the PC's inherent upgradability will ensure it outlasts the PlayStation 2.



Richie Shoemaker

Single-player games – are their days numbered?
I hope not, they can be just as enjoyable as multiplayer games, but until online costs are cheaper it will always be a minority sport in the UK.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

Initially, but within a year it'll look like an old cloth cat – falling apart at the seams.



Jeremy Wells

Single-player games – are their days numbered?
Half-Life has proved that there's still life in single-player games.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

If it comes with a modem, maybe, but if not, no.



Steve Hill

Single-player games – are their days numbered?
Rubbish. The world will always be full of angry loners.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

Yes, I think it might, but I shouldn't start worrying yet. It's still a long way off.



Charlie Brooker

Single-player games – are their days numbered?
As long as there are lonely inadequates, there'll be single-player games.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

Possibly. But whatever will be will be. The future's not ours to see. Que sera sera.



Paul Presley

Single-player games – are their days numbered?
No. Young males will always want to play with themselves and there'll always be a Lara Croft to help them do so.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

It's a 'fixed technology' machine whereas the PC will always be able to pick up bigger and better sticks with which to hit back.



Keith Pullin

Single-player games – are their days numbered?

No, not yet. When the Internet speeds up, maybe.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

No way – the Dreamcast is more likely to challenge the PC. It has better specs and it will be released sooner.



Adam Phillips

Single-player games – are their days numbered?

I hope not. They enable more narrative-driven gameplay, which can prove more involving.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

Maybe PlayStation 4 or 5, which you may be able to upgrade like you can a PC.



David McCandless

Single-player games – are their days numbered?

No, they're not, but it will help when hooking up to the Internet is a bit cheaper and faster.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

Possibly, yes. It depends on how much PC technology advances and how cheap it becomes.



Warren Chrismas

Single-player games – are their days numbered?

No, definitely not.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

Possibly, yes. It depends on how much PC technology advances and how cheap it becomes.



Phil Wand

Single-player games – are their days numbered?

Half-Life, *TOCA 2*, *Baldur's Gate* – nah, don't think so.

Will the PlayStation 2 threaten the PC as a games machine?

Consider a 300MHz CPU, modem, USB ports, a 17Gb DVD drive, Sony's marketing and a £200 price-tag. By comparison the PC looks desperately complicated and massively overpriced.

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD

19 BOLSOVER STREET

LONDON W1P 7HJ

TEL: 0171 631 1433

FAX: 0171 436 1321

EMAIL: letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

WEBSITE: www.pczone.co.uk

PARTY ANIMALS

Editor Chris Anderson 0171 917 3901

Reviews Editor Paul Mallinson 0171 917 3830

News Editor Richie Shoemaker 0171 917 5675

Art Editor Phil Clark 0171 917 3911

Production Editor Paul Henderson 0171 917 5676

Production Editor Thaea Marcuard 0171 917 3914

Designers David McCormack, Tim MacDonald

Sub Editor Lynn Jones

Writers Charlie Brooker, Matthew Burgess, Warren Chrisman, Steve Hill, Adam Phillips, Paul Presley, Keith Pullin, Craig Vaughan, Phil Wand, Jeremy Wells, Andrew Wright

EPU Manager Sarah Gilliver 0171 917 7715

CD Producer Alan Stonebridge 0171 917 6466

CD Editor Daniel Emery 0171 917 7689

Tips line Richard Crook 0171 917 7698

Origination Elements 0171 323 0022

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PREFERRING TO WASH THE CAR

Publisher Helen Cribb 0171 917 5644

Editor-in-Chief Mark Higham 0171 917 7791

Group Publisher Tim Ponting 0171 917 7666

Consultant Creative Director Vici MacDonald

Advertisement Director Ian Westwood

Advertisement Manager Mandy Hewitt

0171 917 3873

Account Manager Emma Lewis 0171 917 7708

Deputy New Media Business Manager Julia Smith 0171 917 7811

Production Manager Gemma North 0171 917 3994

Group Production Manager Simon Maggs 0171 917 7676

Marketing Manager Paul Smyth 0171 917 3946

List Rental Executive Nerys Church 0171 917 6563

Reprints Manager Zuzanna Korda 0171 917 3883

Direct Marketing Director Julian Thorne

Newtrade Manager James Burney 0171 917 7810

Research Director Lesley Downey 0171 917 7702

Publishing Director Christine Martin

Circulation & Marketing Services Director Sean Farmer

Non-Executive Director Dick Pountain

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Managing Director Alastair Ramsay

Chairman Felix Dennis

WIN Name the three warning factions in *Starsiege Universe*. Send entries on the back of a postcard to: I've read the small print, PC ZONE (76), 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ by Friday 23rd April. Winner and prize announced same place next issue. Daniel Foon from Sheffield wins the ZONE grab bag of goodies from last month's compo for the correct answer *Space Invaders*.

TIPS LINE: 0171 917 7698

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SUBSCRIPTIONS HOTLINE:

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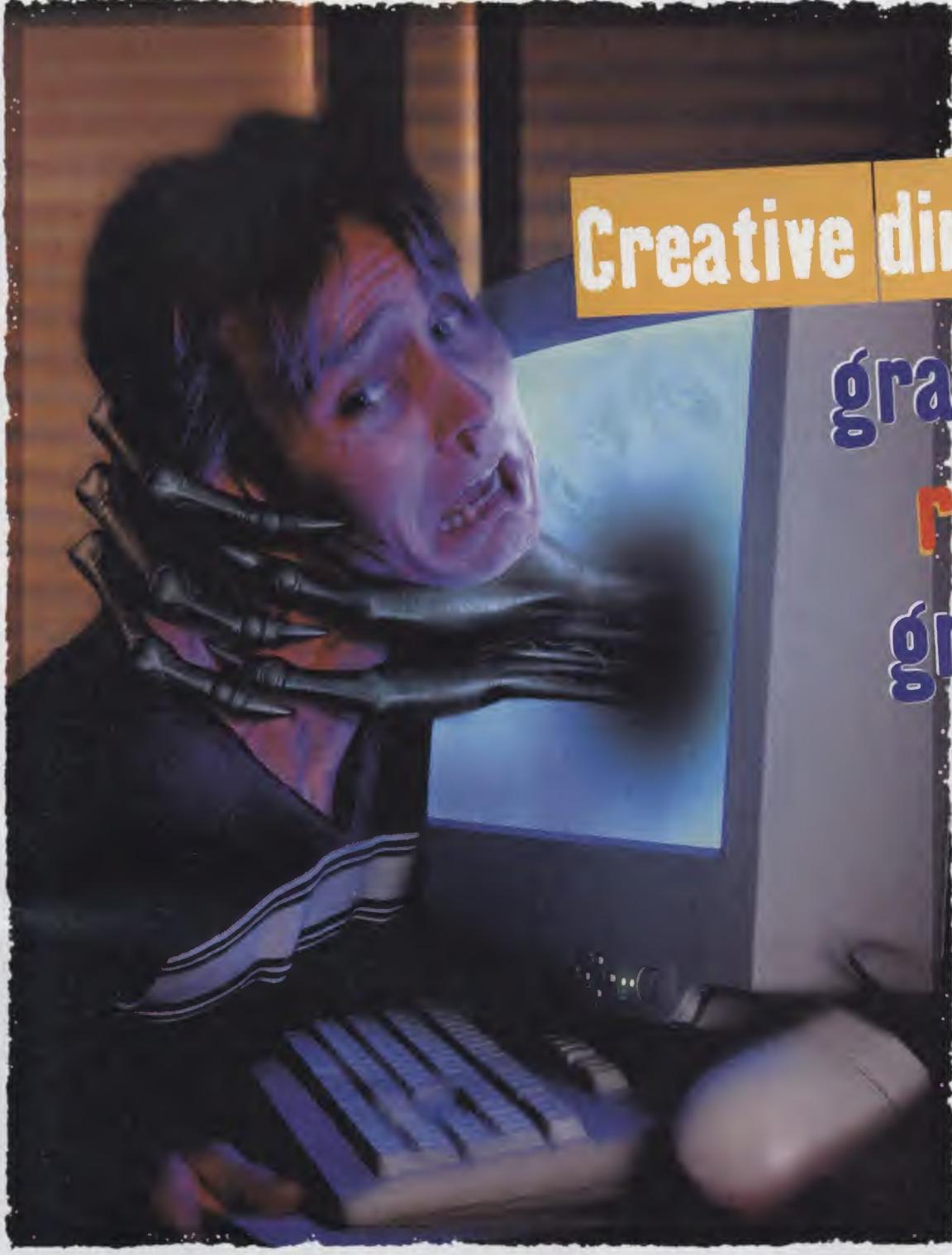
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MAIL BOX



PC ZONE readers embrace the online gaming phenomenon with open arms; DVD under discussion; and who decides the price you pay for games?

ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

If your letter is selected as Letter of the Month we'll send you some promotional goodies, a game and maybe even some hardware!

WRITE TO Mailbox, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

WHO NEEDS DVD?

I am writing with regard to the new phenomenon that is DVD. Still relatively in its infancy as a new media, DVD players are on sale in places such as Curry's and Dixons for as much as £400 to £600. Now is it me, or am I really missing the point? Why would I want to buy one of these machines just to watch a film on, without being able to record or do anything else with it? I accept that there are extra features included on the discs themselves, and maybe somewhat better visuals. But £600 just to watch the out-takes that weren't included in the film, and maybe the odd interview here and there that you can

see on Barry Norman's *Film on Sky*? And when will we see PC games that fully utilise DVD technology? I would be interested to hear your thoughts about this.

Rant over. Keep up the good work on what is an excellent magazine.

Mr D Constable

• Film enthusiasts will buy DVD players because DVD films offer crystal-clear pictures and they last longer than standard video tapes. For PC gamers the appeal is not as obvious. While DVD-ROM drives are readily available, they're not yet selling in large numbers (although many hardware manufacturers now supply them as

standard), so games publishers aren't exactly falling over themselves to produce DVD titles. We don't expect to see DVD games appearing in any great numbers until next year at the earliest, so wait until then to worry about it.

A PROPHET SPEAKS

Congratulations for taking back the crown for best-selling games magazine. However, I have got a few criticisms. First off, for a games magazine I don't think you are really paying much attention to what is probably the future of PC gaming, and that is online gaming. In the whole magazine you have

three pages dedicated to this side of gaming, one page of which (Online Zone) I feel isn't really being put to its best use, and feels rushed and could be better utilised.

Surely more space can be given to telling us more of what is going on. For instance, there are important online games in the pipeline which I don't think you have ever really said anything about (*Everquest*, *Middle Earth* etc). And I'm sure you can use a lot of space just telling us what's going on in the *Quake/Half-Life* community regarding mods

"I don't think you are really paying enough attention to what is probably the future of PC gaming, and that is online gaming"

JASON HOLMES

LETTER OF THE MONTH

PC GAMES ARE GOOD FOR THE SOUL

Like many people my age (late twenties), I seem to have been playing computer games for a large proportion of my formative years. I have on occasion tried to add up the hours I've spent, from the tender age of ten onwards, sitting in front of various flashing arrangements of pixels. I remember bashing away at the likes of *Atic Atac* and *Jet Set Willy* (which after even months of constant playing I was never able to complete – did anyone complete this game?) to the tune of my parents cursing me for wasting my time. Replace *Jet Willy* with *Championship Manager*, and my parents with my girlfriend, and 20 years down the line I am still at it.

However, there is a payback of sorts for all this time I 'wasted' playing games. Thanks to playing dozens of text-based adventure games from companies like Infocom and Rainbird that were around in the eighties, I now have a typing speed of over 50 words per minute, and I have never had a typing lesson in my life. Much more importantly, it has provided me with the basic ingredients of one of the most important skills we are likely to need in the next millennium – computer literacy. Which leads me to believe that computer games (particularly on PC) are not a waste of time for today's younger generation. We cannot tell our children that computer games are bad for them, and then expect them to use complicated computer systems and software in the workplace in adulthood.

Maybe it's time someone wrote a definitive history of video games over the years and the effects they have on the people who play them. Is there any published material on the history of computer games available out there? I know



CM2 taught Robert Park how to type, apparently.

there are countless sites on the Internet that deal with this kind of nostalgia, but what I really want is a complete encyclopedia with screenshots and everything. If it doesn't exist, then I may have to research and write it myself.

Robert Park

• While console games teach you little in the way of computer literacy apart from how to navigate simple menus, PC games almost force gamers to learn how their PC works, as many of our long-standing (and long-suffering) readers will readily admit. So there is some argument that PC games can play a valuable part in teaching newcomers to the PC what to expect in the workplace (more of the same problems, but expect to be messing about with modems and networks instead of *Half-Life* and *Quake II*). Yes, there are many works published on this subject, but none of them that we've come across can be considered definitive, so why not have a go yourself and let us know how you get on.

and the like, and not just write another article about an upcoming online tournament on Wireplay.

After the above is all said and done though, yours is the best and most professional PC games mag out there, and long may you reign.

Jason Holmes

• We are currently planning to expand our online coverage and integrate it with the rest of the magazine (see Editorial leader on page 6).

BANNED AT BIRTH?

I am eagerly awaiting the release of *Kingpin*, even more so than *Duke 4Ever*. I read in *PC ZONE* issue #74 (March) that the release date for *Kingpin* was April, but I read in another magazine that it would probably be out



Are online games the way forward? Er, yes, basically.

WITH JUST VIVA FOOTBALL AND A PC OR A PLAYSTATION HE CAN CHANGE FOOTBALL HISTORY!

WILLY CUPP

CAN SCOTLAND'S 1974 TEAM BEAT CURRENT WORLD CHAMPIONS FRANCE AND PROGRESS FOR THE FIRST TIME?



DRINK CHOCOLATE MILK
EAT SNAILS
PLAY VIVA FOOTBALL

YOU'LL HAVE TO GET YOURSELF HOME DAD.
I'M OFF TO PLAY VIVA FOOTBALL.



THE FRENCH GET THEIR NOSES IN FRONT AS SCOTLAND WILT IN THE INTENSE 15°C HEAT.



BUT, WITH DAD DOWN THE PUB AND MUM OUT 'SOMEWHERE', WILLY DECIDES TO REVERSE SCOTLAND'S RUN OF UNLUCKY CUP EXITS.



VIVA FOOTBALL AND WILLY CUPP TURN THE GAME ON ITS BIG FRENCH HEAD.



WILLY PLAYS A CLEVER ONE-TWO TO SCORE THE WINNER.

OOO!
MES
ONIONS!



SCOTLAND THE PALE WIN 2-1.



BE LIKE ME AND PREVENT THE FRENCH FROM COMPLAINING AND GESTICULATING THEIR WAY TO VICTORY. WITH JUST VIVA FOOTBALL ON PLAYSTATION AND PC YOU CAN CHANGE FOOTBALL HISTORY!

around August. Do you have an estimated release date?

However, more to the point, it only dawned on me the other day that it could get banned. If *GTA* was on the verge of getting banned because you can run over a couple of pixelated characters, what are the chances of *Kingpin* getting banned? I mean, there was a lot of commotion about *GTA*, so I don't think setting lifelike people on fire and bashing

their brains in with a piece of lead piping while shouting "Die, you motherf**ker!" will go down too well, do you? Is there any guarantee that *Kingpin* will get released?

Phil Hirst

★ Like any other title likely to cause controversial mirth upon its release, *Kingpin* will have to be given a British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) rating before it goes on sale. So yes, it will definitely be

released, although it may be available to 'mature audiences' only. All will be revealed in our exclusive review in next month's issue (on sale Thursday 6 May). Providing the censors have finished with the game by then, of course - remember *Carmageddon*?

PRICE POINT

I was just wondering why some games cost a lot more than others. Electronic Arts'

SHORTS

Keep your letter short and you're more likely to get a reply in PC ZONE

A SAMARITAN WRITES

I was reading the plaintive letters regarding the inability to get a copy of *Ultima Online* in the UK. Obviously those people haven't visited the centre of the UK yet - by that I mean Kettering - because as of Thursday March 11 at 5pm, Beatties had a copy of the game on their shelves. I would have thought that this would be one of the first places people would try when trying to track down old software.

That's my good Samaritan bit done. I feel good all over now.

Mark Hope

★ So there you have it: Kettering is *UO* central. Well, who would have thought it?

HELP

As a newbie to this Internet malarkey, could you run some sort of idiot-proof guide to downloads and multiplay *Half-Life* capers in a future issue?

Steve Waite

★ You read our minds - we're running a feature on exactly this subject in our next issue.

IN DEFENCE

I just felt that it should be mentioned that newer copies of *SiN* come with the patch CD included. In the interest of fairness to the game, I thought that this effort by Activision should be noted - even if the patch shouldn't have been needed in the first place.

Doug Greenwood

BETA BLUES

A few months ago (when you previewed 50 games from E3) you mentioned that you received a beta version of *Driver*. I looked everywhere for one but there was nothing. Then there was the *Quake II* beta version and lots of others besides. Where do you get these from, and could you supply them on the cover disc? I also recently checked GT's website for info on *Driver*, but alas no luck. Anyway, congrats on the magazine and keep up the good work.

Roland Le Good

★ Publishers provide us with betas for preview purposes, and they're not available to the public. No official release date on *Driver* yet, although we have been told autumn.

NO DEMO?

I've just gone round every newsagent in my town to find a copy of PC ZONE a day early so I can play the CM3 demo on the CD. Then I came home to check your website and discovered that there is no CM3 demo on the CD! Oh, nooo!

There was never any chance of a CM3 demo being on the mag, was there? Shame, you would have sold out the day the mag came out.

Nik Sherman

★ We couldn't put the *Championship Manager 3* demo on our cover CD until we physically - literally - actually had the thing in our hands. We finally got it this month,

as you will have noticed. We apologise if this comes too late for most of you (the game may be out by the time you read this), but we ran the demo as soon as we possibly could.

THE OTHER SIDE

Thanks for a superb mag. I've been reading it ever since issue one, and although you seem to have gone through your ups and downs it's better than ever.

Pam Millward

A few months ago, I noticed on my newsagent's shelf a sticker on the front of a PC mag stating 'Only £2.99'. That publication was, of course, PC ZONE. Having previously been forced to shell out the best part of a fiver for a PC mag, I thought "Sod it! Let's give it a go."

Having read it from cover to cover, it dawned on me what I'd been missing by reading other mags. I liked it so much I bought the company (actually, I took out a subscription). Good information, excellent humour, and well presented. In short, it's the best. Charlie Brooker's cool, but he needs to be told that *Iron Maiden rule!* Keep up the great work, guys.

Rob McHugo

★ For every letter of complaint we get, we receive ten letters just like these two. Thanks to you both and to all the people who write in to show their appreciation. It makes those late nights on deadline all the more worthwhile, believe me.



Final Fantasy VII: would you pay £49.99 for this game?

games always cost £39.99 no matter how big or small the game is. The average game nowadays costs £34.99, but some publishers aren't content with that. When *Worms Armageddon* came out it cost just £29.99; *Tomb Raider III* and *Colin McCrae Rally* cost £34.99; *SimCity 3000* and *Need For Speed III* were £39.99; while *Quake II* and *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* cost £44.99 and *Final Fantasy VII* cost an incredible £49.99. I think this is a ridiculous price to ask for a CD-ROM game. Why is there such a difference in price? Also, it seems that about six months after release some games then go down in price to around £9.99, while others can stay around at their original price for over year. I do not think that any of this is fair, as some publishers get really rich by having high prices, while others, who care about their customers, do not get as much.

By the way, thank you for providing the greatest games magazine.

Paul C

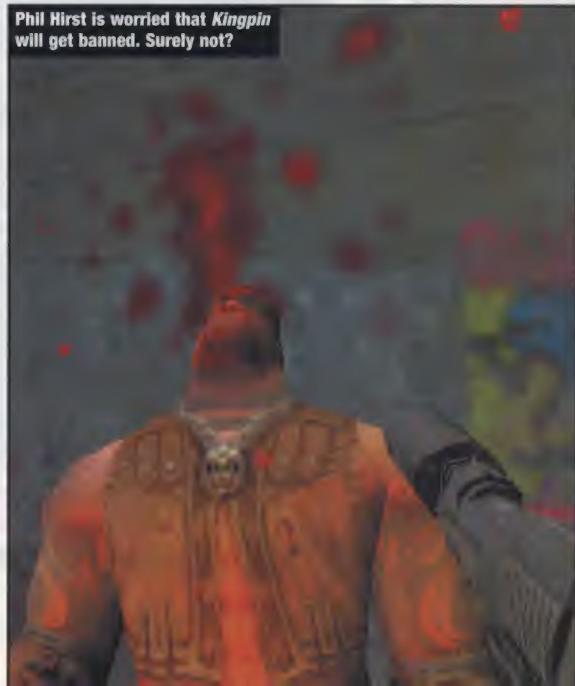
Phil Hirst is worried that *Kingpin* will get banned. Surely not?

★ The pricing issue is as much a mystery to us as it is to you. Some publishers charge as much as they think they can get away with, others put everything out at £34.99 in an attempt to maximise sales, while others still (like Electronic Arts, for example) simply put everything out at £39.99 just to make life easier for themselves. It hardly matters, as retailers

“When will we see PC games that fully utilise DVD technology?”

D CONSTABLE

take little notice of publishers' Recommended Retail Prices (RRPs) anyway, and discount games (or not) as they see fit. Our advice is to ignore the prices printed in magazines (including the ones you see in PC ZONE - they're intended merely as a general guide to an expected RRP), and shop around to get your games at the best price. □



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There's no such thing as a free lunch.

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member it's only a game. RESIDENT EVIL 2 now on PC

TOP STORY



Expect to encounter all manner of mythical beasts. Sadly, Johnny Morris isn't doing the voices.

Get Fit With Paul Presley - £12.99 from all good video outlets.

TURNING TO THE DARK SIDE VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Nihilistic
PUBLISHER Activision
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Winter 99

IN SUMMARY

Based on the popular RPG, you play a blood-sucking goody-two-shoes out to rid the world of vampires. Join up with other like-minded individuals and travel through 400 years of history.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Set in medieval Europe and modern America, and featuring spells, guns and sword fighting, *Vampire* is set to be an epic that combines action with deep role-playing elements. And with much of Nihilistic's talent culled from LucasArts, it will be a team to watch.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

The only may be in creating a game that satisfies both action and RPG fans.

Nihilistic bring the world's second most popular role-player to the PC

CRUSADER Richie Shoemaker



You're the co-creator of both *Dark Forces* and *Jedi Knight*. You've also worked on *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*, *Shadows Of The Empire* and *Force Commander*.

Basically, you are to *Star Wars* games what George Lucas is to *Star Wars* films – the young apprentice to the Jedi master.

With the *Star Wars* prequel, *Phantom Menace*, soon to be unleashed and George Lucas sure to give you the green light to create a *Quake*-style tie-in, you'd have thought life couldn't get any better. So what do you go and do? Obvious: leaving the warm bosom of LucasArts behind, you set out into the unknown – turn to the Dark Side – to set up your own

development team and start work on a game based on an obscure table-top RPG. Welcome, dear reader, to the crazy world of Ray Gresko.

The decision to start work on *Vampire: The Masquerade* isn't so surprising when you consider that with an estimated 1.5 million gaunt-

decided to go the full 3D route. With a brand new engine – called Nod – the aim is to create a game that combines the immediacy of *Tomb Raider* with the depth of *Baldur's Gate*, looking ten times better than either and boasting an epic storyline spanning hundreds of years.

With a brand new engine – called Nod – the aim is to create a game that combines the immediacy of *Tomb Raider* with the depth of *Baldur's Gate*

faced players, *Vampire* is the second most popular role-playing game on the planet, behind *AD&D*. So, if like Ray you were one of *Vampire*'s biggest fans, you might decide to start afresh too.

Instead of churning out one of those stat-heavy isometric RPGs that seem to be all the rage, Nihilistic have

Initially set in medieval Prague, you play Christophe Romuald, a crusading knight who has been turned into a blood-sucking Bauhaus fan – the kind of creature you've made it your business to eliminate. Having been made immortal, you continue your unending quest to rid the world of 'bad' vampires, eventually ending up in modern-day London and New York.

What is immediately impressive, even at this early stage, is that

Vampire looks the business. Not only that, but the interface is spot-on. The aim is to have the entire game playable through just the mouse. You see, it's a point-and-clicker that not only works in the traditional way, but also lets you position the camera wherever you wish – even slipping into a first-person view.

The animation for the characters is already stunning, and some of the creatures look truly horrific. Added to this are the RPG elements, where you can take control of and/or send four different characters on separate missions, each of them acting through realistic AI. So far, we've only seen a few Prague levels, and considering the fact that they comprise only a third of the game, we have to say we're impressed.

With many months of coding and tweaking ahead of them, Nihilistic have their work cut out. Hopefully, they won't end up regretting turning down those *Phantom Menace* premier tickets. Madness.

Mortified at being turned into a Dodgy Goff, Christophe tries to hack his own head off.

TOP STORY



There's no time for a dip, as death stalks your every move.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER TS Group Entertainment

PUBLISHER TBA

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE TBA

IN SUMMARY

Commandos meets Tomb Raider or Quake in a realistic contemporary setting

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The game takes place in the 1990s and has no goblins, monsters or space aliens

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

It's being developed in Russia by some people that no one has ever heard of

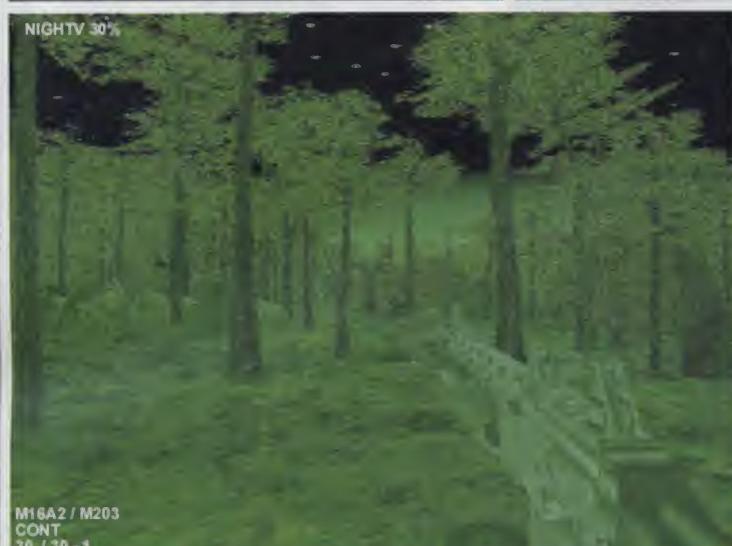
PRIVATE WARS

It's not private any more, thanks to our super soaraway ZONE exclusive

★ PRIVATE HELL Steve Hill



The obligatory large explosions are useful for breaking stuff.



Night-time missions become a lot easier with a pair of fancy Night-O-Goggles™.



We see a lot of games here at *PC ZONE*, and all too often they adhere to a clichéd futuristic scenario involving scary monsters, alien aggressors or hideous villains. Not so *Private Wars*, which takes the bold step of basing the action in the 1990s, in a world of Colombian drug barons, Middle Eastern terrorists, industrial espionage, VIP kidnappings and border conflicts. In fact, it's a bit

human misery into a game? Like this: you play the part of a former secret service executive who has founded a private mercenary agency carrying out various small-scale paramilitary operations. Clearly, money is the primary goal, and although morality is way down on your list of priorities, some vague sense of responsibility can serve to increase your marketability. For instance, mercilessly butchering swathes of innocent people during an assassination attempt will not

available mercenaries, negotiate their fee, supply them with the necessary equipment, arrange transportation and even consider medical insurance. When you're happy and ready to play, the game goes into the mission, which, visually at least, is much the same as your common or garden 3D shooter.

However, the similarity ends there, as instead of taking the role of a single 'super-marine', you are responsible for the movements of each and every mercenary, and a great deal of strategical and tactical thinking is required to succeed. As well as the standard first-person view, a third-person perspective can be brought into play, as can an isometric view or even a top-down affair. And perhaps bizarrely, the game can also be played as turn-based.

As for realism, it can be tweaked to suit your preference. In Arcade mode, your mercenaries miraculously survive grenade explosions, magical medi-kits

restore full health, and enemies drop like flies under your unlimited firepower. However, Simulation mode is a different bag altogether. You can't stroll around carrying 12 different weapons at once, a four-metre jump will shatter both your legs, and a bullet in the face will puncture your fragile bone and sink into the soft centre of your brain, removing a large chunk of it via the back of your skull. It's a laugh though, innit? **PCZ**

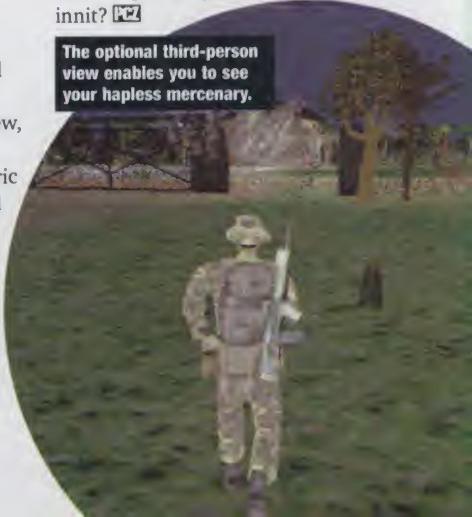
The optional third-person view enables you to see your hapless mercenary.

like an interactive news broadcast, bar the token skateboarding dog story at the end.

So how have they managed to entwine such basic mainstays of

endeavor you to prospective employees.

The game consists of a fixed number of pre-defined missions, and before embarking on each one you have to select a crack team from your



TOURING CARS JUST GOT



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MORE CLASHES



MORE ACTION

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OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

9/10

“1998's GREATEST RACER.”
“TOCA 2 IS TOCA TIMES 2...
YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.”

PC GAMER
92%



“ONE OF THE FINEST DRIVING
GAMES EVER MADE.”

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PC GAMES 4EVER

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



Being a news editor can be bloody annoying. There you are, looking into

the future at games to come, while everyone around you is playing the ones that are here now. And ZONE HQ is crackling with the sound of gunfire – yes, *StarSiege Tribes* (reviewed on page 76) has set the place alight. And here I am telling you about it when I could be joining in the war between PC ZONE and the office next door.

Perhaps the biggest single news story this month is the official announcement of Sony's new PlayStation. A number of developers were whisked off to Japan and spooned plenty of technical and marketing spiel, and on the whole came away rather impressed. Sony even went so far as to announce their intention to smash "the Intel/Microsoft alliance", which some seem to think may spell doom for the PC as a games machine – utter rubbish, in my opinion. While the PC is unlikely to ever dominate the games industry, I can't imagine a time when it will simply curl up and die to make way for set-top boxes. These announcements are usually a load of hot air anyway. At the end of the day, PlayStation Deux will live or die on the strength of its games. Backwards-compatible the PSX 2 may be, but the PC still remains the finest machine on the planet.

I've had a great response from my plea last month for help from the development community. I'd like to thank Gustaf Frankel from Kaos Kontrol, Jon Ellison and Peter Lovell from Borderline, and Blake Robinson from Blackmoon Development, all of whom have been keen to pass on information on their projects. If any other developers out there want our readers to hear about what they're up to, feel free to drop me a line at Richie.pcz@dial.pipex.com.

THE PCZONE CHARTS

More comprehensive than ever

P.26



ONLINE ZONE

Radium: home to all things Half-Life

P.28



Swords & Sorcery:
straight outta Vegas.



Wizardry goes 3D for the first time.



Westwood cast their spell on S&S.

Werewolf: The Apocalypse – Knight Lore for the '90s?

“Werewolf: The Apocalypse: look forward to being able to morph between human, Near-Wolf and Wolf-Man”



TECH-HEAD

Sony's new PlayStation – the facts behind the hype

P.32

**CONSOLE ZONE**

Import shops are buzzing with the sound of *Silent Hill*



P.37

MAN WHO KNOWS

The very latest industry gossip



P.38

HOTSHOTS

A sneak preview of up-and-coming game releases

P.42



DUNGEONEERING

Grab your chain mail coats, people, RPGs are all the rage these days

With *Baldur's Gate* (PCZ #73, 85%) the surprise hit of the year so far, RPGs are once again popular. *D&D* fanatics don't have to hide their multi-faceted dice in their beige corduroy pockets any more, and can now roll them down the street without fear of ridicule. However, now that Westwood have finally released *Lands Of Lore III* (PCZ #74, 90%), it seems that the 3D RPG is coming of age – and a few of them might even be worth waiting for.

Not content with sticking with their best-selling *Lands Of Lore* franchise, Vegas-based Westwood are currently linked with *Swords & Sorcery*, another title from third-party developers Heuristic. Designed by DW Bradley, *Swords & Sorcery* enables

parties of six to explore various 3D environments through swamps and dungeons, during both night and day, in search of the Mavin Sword. The game has actually been in development for quite a while, with progress delayed while EA went through their acquisition phase last summer. Now reaching its final stages, *Swords & Sorcery* should be available this summer.

Moving over to Sweden, the tentatively-titled *Sorcery* from Starbreeze is due for release through Gremlin later this year. There are no details on gameplay as yet, but the engine has been built from scratch and promises *Quake III*-style curves, shadows and the now obligatory dynamic lighting.

We've already seen the potential of Nihilistic's *Vampire: The Masquerade* (see Top Story on page 16), and here we have news of another RPG based on the *White Wolf* title. *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* is a third-person game written to take advantage of Epic's *Unreal* engine, and you can look forward to being able to morph between human, Near-Wolf and Wolf-Man – much like the speccy classic *Knight Lore*, but prettier. As well as the opportunity of joining up with various Wolf clans, you can also

expect plenty of spells and hand-to-hand combat. The game is due for release in the autumn.

Two other games worth a mention are additions to the long-running *Wizardry* and *Might & Magic* series, both up to their seventh and eighth outing respectively. Development on *Wizardry 8*, from recently defunct Sirtech, is still going ahead – albeit slowly – and fans will no doubt be pleased to hear that the developers have finally embraced 3D technology. *Might & Magic VII* will support 3D acceleration for the first time, and both games will no doubt sell more copies in the States than they will over here.

Finally, what of *Ultima: Ascension*, the ninth – though technically tenth – in the series? Well, after what seems like years, we will finally see it this year. In fact with a bit of luck we'll have an in-depth preview very soon.

WORLD WIDE WANDERING

Ultimate RPGs are coming online

With Editor Chris Anderson constantly harping on about *Ultima Online*, you may be forgiven for thinking that no one else has caught on to the fact that there are thousands of people hankering for more online swordplay. Enter two other multiplayer RPGs, both wearing full suits of 3D clothing.

EverQuest is 989 Studios' big online hope, and offers a choice of 12 races and 14 character classes, and over 40 skills to learn. More than 1000 players can take part on each server, and so far most of them have been impressed, not least with the graphics. There's no UK release date yet, but it's already on sale across the pond.

Microsoft are joining the party with their own *Ultima* beater, *Asheron's Call*. Playable free this autumn on MSN Gaming Zone, *Asheron's Call* will be truly worldwide, with a host of servers linked together in one huge real-time game.

Interestingly, both developers are going some way into eliminating player killers, ie those who go all out to eliminate first-timers. PK'ers will be tolerated, but with the option to ignore their unwanted attentions, both *EverQuest* and *Asheron's Call* will be more appealing to those disillusioned with *Ultima Online*, especially here in the UK where there were only a few thousand copies of the game on sale.



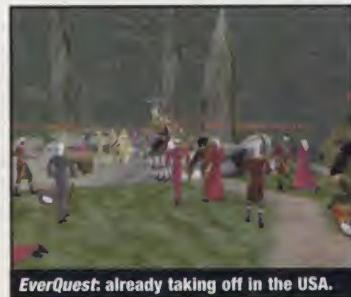
Might & Magic VII: For Blood & Honour – and why not?



The cast is assembled, but it's *Ultima IX* that most people are looking forward to.



Asheron's Call: free to play on MSN.



EverQuest: already taking off in the USA.



Swords and Sorcery: look – curves.



Sorcery: now that's a spell.

KROWD KONTROL

Is BlockWar the new Syndicate Wars?

When *Syndicate Wars* (PCZ #43, 95%) first came out nearly three years ago, it showed Bullfrog at their darkest. Violent, original, graphically sexy, it should have spawned a thousand tributes. Instead, developers took up with the C&C idea, a 3D action strategy game perhaps beyond all but the finest minds in the industry. No doubt today Bullfrog are considering a new *Syndicate*, but for now we can look forward to *BlockWar*, a seriously twisted lookalike that if picked up by a big publishing house could be with us by the end of the year.

Based in a city reminiscent of New York, *BlockWar* puts you in command of a group of mercenaries and hoodlums. The aim is to take over the city, region by region, laying waste to anyone wanting to end your expansionist ideals – which is mainly of course the police. By taking over city districts you can recruit others to your cause and buy new weaponry and vehicles. There's no resource management, it's more a case of using manpower and money to fuel your machine. If you lose men, you can always recruit more by fighting on. And if you have enough money raised from those regions already under your control you can upgrade your weaponry.

"*BlockWar* is meant to be dark and disturbing," says Gustaf Frankel, lead designer at Kaos Kontrol. "It's deliberate that we're not using brightly coloured lighting and unrealistic explosions."

According to Gustaf, *BlockWar* is raising a few eyebrows in the States, with some websites concerned with the cop-killing nature of the game. With France and Germany cracking down on violent games, it seems a shame that it may have to be toned down. However, if *BlockWar* appeals to the funny bone as well as the eye, Kaos Kontrol could be on to something. We shall see.



Nice legs,
shame about
the face.



“It’s meant to be dark and disturbing. We’re not using brightly coloured lighting or unrealistic explosions”

GUSTAAF FRANKEL, LEAD DESIGNER AT KAOS KONTROL



Cop killing – should ensure a healthy bout of controversy.



Top-down and first-person views are on offer.

THE VOYAGE CONTINUES



Star Trek: Voyager – The coolest Starfleet vessel thus far? Engage.

Please let us kill
Neelix. Please...



Taking the role of *Voyager*'s security chief, you control and direct a team of officers as in forthcoming titles *X:COM Alliance* and *Hired Guns*.

Having secured themselves a lucrative ten-year *Star Trek* licence, Activision have announced that Raven Software – of *Hexen II* and *Heretic II* fame – are working on a first-person shoot 'em up based in the Delta Quadrant, the area of space where *Voyager* went and got itself lost.

Paramount, owners of all things *Trek*, are keen for a developer to finally release a *Star Trek* title to rival LucasArts' hugely successful efforts. And although details on the game are scarce, you can expect Raven to push the licence to its limits, perhaps for the first time allowing you to blow the limbs off Starfleet personnel – in multiplayer games at least – and finally deliver some decent weaponry.

The team are currently putting a demo together to show us at E3, with an aim to finishing the game early next year. Hopefully we'll have screenshots in a couple of months.

F-22 Lightning 3 will offer you the chance to drop 'the big one'.



LIGHTNING STRIKES THREE

Okay, so you've fired off a few Mavericks in your time, and maybe let loose the odd bouncing bomb, but have you ever fired off a tactical nuclear weapon – burning millions of innocent civilians to a powder, searing eyeballs to backs of heads for anyone unlucky enough to be within a five-mile radius of the explosion? Thought not.

Well that's about to change when NovaLogic release *F-22 Lightning 3* in May. As well as nukes and the usual conventional weapons, *Lightning 3* promises the most realistic weather effects yet seen in a flight sim and – typical of NovaLogic – will be a game that both novices and veterans should get to grips with immediately. Expect a little controversy and more details next issue, on sale Thursday 6 May.

SHORTS

WORLD OF SPORT

Electronic Arts, 'owners of sport', have made another addition to their button-popping horde of sports licences. With football, rugby, cricket, basketball, hockey and golf licences already signed up until the end of time, they've since added Formula 1 to their collection. The FIA licence is not exclusive, however, with Eidos also ready to release an official F1 sim (previewed on page 54). EA's bid to host the 2006 World Cup Finals remains unaffected.

MORE MECHS

FASA Interactive, developers of *MechWarrior 3*, have already announced their intention to release a mission disc later on in the year, as well as one for last year's strategy spin-off *MechCommander*. *MechCommander: Field Operations* (working title) will add a new campaign, six new Mechs, new vehicles and over ten extra weapons, as well as a mission editor. No release date for either pack has yet been set.



DESERT ISLAND CDS

If David Braben, head of Frontier Developments and co-creator of the legendary *Elite*, was stranded on a desert island with only a PC, an unlimited power supply and five games, which games would he choose?



- ★ TRANSPORT TYCOON (MicroProse)
- ★ DEFENDER (by Eugene Jarvis)
- ★ HALF-LIFE (Sierra)
- ★ POPULOUS (Bullfrog)
- ★ FRONTIER – as long as I could take the sources *
- * choice if allowed only one game

Comment

"I thought *Transport Tycoon* was a good game when I first saw it. I haven't played it all the way through."

"I would have to choose the original *Defender* – I could run it under MAME."

"Superficially, *Half-Life* looks quite good. I generally don't like first-person shooters (other than as a multiplayer game), but I'd like to play this one more."

"I thoroughly enjoyed the first *Populous*, but I haven't yet played *Populous III*.

"For both *Frontier* and *First Encounters*

I enjoyed the astronomy side – simulating the formation of solar systems and planets."



The title "WILD METAL COUNTRY" is displayed in a large, stylized font on a metal sign. Below the title are four smaller screens showing different scenes from the game: a landscape with a plane, a tank in a field, a plane flying over water, and two people in a boat. The background is a textured, orange-toned surface.

nails!

**Single & Multi-Player
Next Generation
Killer**

WHERE THE BIG GAME IS

Totally Addictive

AVAILABLE ON PC CD-ROM

**Download the demo from:
www.wildmetalcountry.co.uk**

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CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what you think

THE Virgin MEGASTORES TOP 10

MAR APR	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REVIEW SCORE
2 1	ALPHA CENTAURI	FIRAXIS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	92%
- 2	SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP	MILESTONE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	82%
- 3	PREMIER MANAGER 99	GREMLIN	GREMLIN	81%
1 4	SIMCITY 3000	MAXIS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	92%
- 5	SOUTH PARK	ACCLAIM	ACCLAIM	65%
- 6	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON	MICRPROSE	HASBRO	87%
- 7	RESIDENT EVIL 2	VIRGIN	VIRGIN	90%
5 8	HALF-LIFE	SIERRA	SIERRA	95%
3 9	DELTA FORCE	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	66%
4 10	BALDUR'S GATE	INTERPLAY	INTERPLAY	85%

THE ChartTrack TOP10

MAR APR	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REV SCORE
1 1	SIMCITY 3000	MAXIS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	92%
2 2	SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI	FIRAXIS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	92%
5 3	HALF-LIFE	SIERRA	SIERRA	95%
3 4	DELTA FORCE	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	66%
- 5	SOUTH PARK	ACCLAIM	ACCLAIM	65%
6 6	BALDUR'S GATE	INTERPLAY	INTERPLAY	85%
- 7	PREMIER MANAGER 99	GREMLIN	GREMLIN	81%
4 8	A BUG'S LIFE	DISNEY	DISNEY	NOT REVIEWED
9 9	FIFA 99	EA SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	92%
- 10	TOMB RAIDER III	EIDOS	EIDOS	91%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 1999)

COMPETITION

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do is enter the draw by answering this simple question:

Question: What's the name of *South Park*'s camp animal lover?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with all the information requested, to the address below.

- ★ Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18
- ★ Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies
- ★ Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Send your answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (76), 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Closing date: Friday 23 April

★ Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. Capice?



South Park: one huge turkey.

CHART COMMENT

Championship Manager 3 should be out by the time you read this, and presumably flying off the shelves. In beating *CM3* to the shops, *Gremlin's Premier Manager 99* has ended up picking up a few frustrated armchair managers and is actually – surprise surprise – a pretty good game (check out the review on page 86 if you don't believe me).

The other new Chart Track entry is *South Park*, again reviewed this issue (page 105). Following on from *Delta Force*'s success last month, it seems that many people are still swayed by marketing campaigns. If you're one of the unlucky punters who bought *South Park*, you're either easily pleased or sorely disappointed. Next time wait for the review, eh?

Richie Shoemaker

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Oh my god, they've killed *South Park*!"
A Scouser, Liverpool

"Actually, that *Premier Manager* isn't half bad. I only bought it cos *CM3* wasn't out when I went to my local. Rest assured though I'll take it back tomorrow when *CM3* comes out – if it does." Trashman, Sarf London

"Someone should release the new *Star Wars* trailer on CD-ROM. I bet that would storm up the charts. I'd certainly buy it for £1.99."

Jonesy, Gloucester

"South Park? Who would buy that when you can have *Half-Life* instead? Twats, I suppose."

Eddie Amblett, Huddersfield

"My friend bought *South Park* and was looking really smug – then we installed it and he practically cried. So we put it back in the box and returned it. You just can't flog a dying horse, even if it has got Isaac Hayes in it."

Cultist, St Albans

"I'm not gonna spend money on *South Park*. And as for *SimCity 3000*, that's just crap! So is *Tomb Raider III*. *Delta Force* is okay, I guess, but *Alpha Centauri* and *Half-Life* are probably the only really good titles in there."

Jon Herman, Rotterdam

"*South Park* is awful. A piece of stinking shit I wouldn't even smear across the face of my worst enemy. My brother bought it though, so that's okay."

Ben, Portsmouth

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 Tomb Raider II Core Design/Eidos
- 2 Quake II id/Activision
- 3 Championship Manager 97/98 Eidos
- 4 FIFA: Road To World Cup EA Sports
- 5 Grand Theft Auto DMA Design/BMG

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 C&C: Red Alert Westwood/Virgin
- 2 FIFA 97 EA Sports
- 3 Tomb Raider Core Design/Eidos
- 4 Encarta 97 Microsoft
- 5 Championship Manager 2 Eidos

5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 Rebel Assault LucasArts/US Gold
- 2 Gabriel Knight Sierra
- 3 The Lawnmower Man Storm
- 4 Iron Helix MicroProse
- 5 Day Of The Tentacle LucasArts/US Gold



As space stations go, it's one of the best we've seen.

SPACIAL AWARENESS



Docking computers would be handy.

Further to last month's article on up-and-coming space combat sims, NovaLogic have released details on *Tachyon: The Fringe*, an *Elite*-style epic that's due for release in September.

The storyline chronicles a war between renegade settlers and GalSpan, the local corporate big boys. And rather than taking a mission-based approach, NovaLogic plan to make the game completely free-form, with trading, adventuring and plenty of mindless blasting. No details yet on how many ships will make it into the game, or whether you'll be able to slug about in massive dreadnoughts, but at least NovaLogic have decided to cast off their hoary old VoxelSpace technology - for now.

MILLENNIUM BUG

"An incredible plague has swept the USA." No, not in real life but in the form of a game called *Abomination*, the new *X-COM*-style tactical actioneer from the creators of *Gangsters*.

The Brood have taken over, and the only sane individuals are eight genetically enhanced humans. Their task is a familiar one - to save the world. The only problem is that to defeat the Brood you have to become them, researching new and alien technologies to defeat the malignant evil that has destroyed civilisation and corrupted the few survivors.

Due for release early this summer, *Abomination* features more than 100 weapons, bags of research, and real-time tactical combat, as well as 200 missions which stretch from devastated New York, through frozen

Siberian wastes and the jungles of Peru, to a subterranean world of terror. For an isometric game *Abomination* is pretty gory, and could

be the next best thing to *X-COM: Genesis*, which may be with us before the end of the year.

Huddling up for warmth in Siberia.

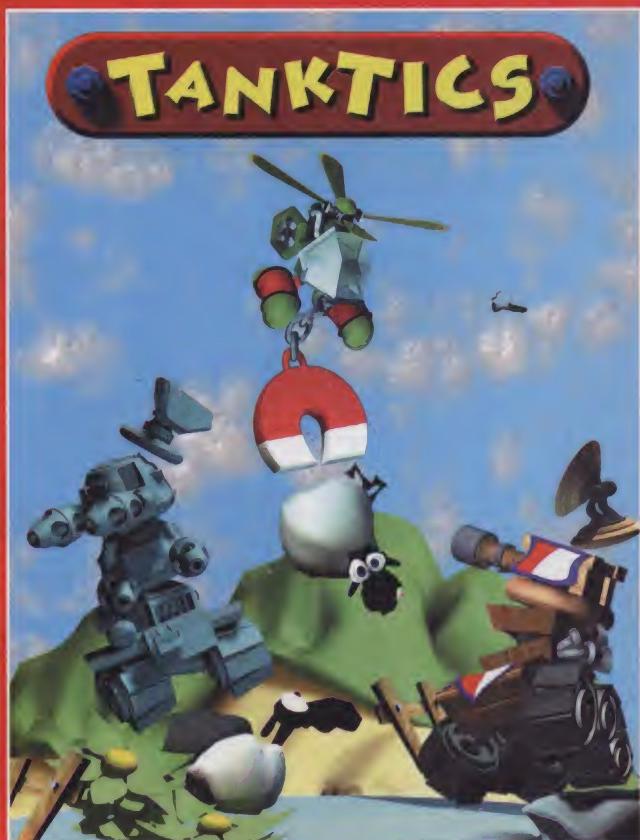


A typical day in New York City.



Bit of a Giger influence?

From the Designers
of Lemmings



Prepare to
become
Billy-No-Mates

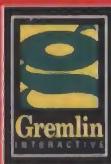


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created by the hand of
man ever...**



**VERY
ADDICTIVE**

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ONLINEZONE

Be careful how you type that URL, or you may be in for a shock. Phil Wand looks at some suspicious goings on

★ KEYBOARD CAREFUL Phil Wand

A mate of mine – no, really, this is true – has a telephone number that's one digit different from the local taxi firm. This means that every Friday night has become a tedious cavalcade of pissed-up city boys asking to be taken home so they can puke in familiar surroundings and not in the doorway of Seven-Eleven.

Instead of politely telling them they've got the wrong number, my friend has recently resorted to saying: "Yeah, mate, be there in ten minutes," and then slamming the phone down. The image of pinstriped banker types stuck out in the cold, looking forlornly at their M3 key fobs is just too entertaining to resist.

But it's not just drunks with wayward fingers who elicit this sort of behaviour. The Internet



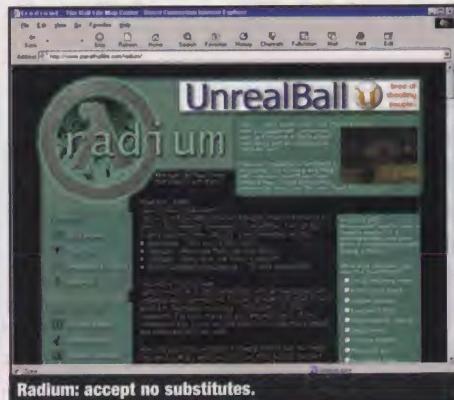
has recently woken up to the fact that people are always 'misdialling' their URLs, and various organisations and individuals are now in the business of catching lost surfers.

Take microsoft.com which, rather than leading to the homepage of a certain well-known software organisation, actually points you to the homepage of arch rivals at the

Linux project. Or excite.com which leads you straight to a sex page. There are countless others: ferarri.com, playstation.com, webcrawler.com, altavista.com, yahhoo.com, netscape.com... the list is almost endless. Check them all out at your leisure, but do make sure you have a tissue to hand – most will try and take advantage of your hormones.

PC ZONE's favourite is whitehouse.net, a piss-take so subtly different from the real thing that the webmasters get floods of mail from patriotic American morons ("There was a Jolly Roger flag flying over the White House, and an eye patch on the Vice President. What's going on?"). Small wonder they all end up shooting each other.

SPESH SITE OF THE MONTH



Radium: accept no substitutes.

RADIUM HALF-LIFE MAP ARCHIVE

www.planethalflife.com/radium

Described as the "The Half-Life Map Centre that Shags" (yeah, baby!), Radium is without doubt the Web's top location for Half-Life bolt-ons. There are three reasons for this. First, it's updated with mechanical regularity by a bunch of dedicated game freaks. Second, it looks lovely (although you really need a 1024x768 desktop to fully appreciate it) and is dead easy to navigate. Third, all maps come with a comprehensive review and a final score reflecting everything from the architecture to how strategic the gameplay is. If you want to get the most from the Half-Life experience, there's no point going anywhere else.

TOP DOWNLOAD OF THE MONTH



JOKEBOX

www.marblemad.com/jokebox

The worst thing about telling a joke is not getting the desired response at the end. For example, my impression of John Wayne sneezing has never once failed to get anything but total silence and bemused expressions. So JokeBox has proved invaluable – it enables me to supply my own applause, whoops of delight, diddydum-chum! drum rolls and manic laughter at the press of a button. The irony is that, even if you're telling the world's oldest joke, the sudden shrieks of an audience wetting themselves is guaranteed to get you laughs. The Web page is in French, but the download button is easy enough to find.

NOW PLAYING

Points win prizes (sometimes)

UPROAR

www.uproar.co.uk

Uproar is a collection of silly Web-based games and quizzes. All high scores get stored to the server, so you'll find your name in lights if you can cut the mustard. Prizes are awarded to the top players of featured games. We spotlight three games below.

THE PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY WARS

A toast-top version of

Othello. Unlike most other versions of the game, your opponent here is a total bastard. You know how your mummy always told you to eat the edges and the corners, and not to accept lifts from anyone in an Austin Maestro? Well, his mummy told him the same thing. Only he's capable of processing more than a million instructions a second. And you're not.



A searing indictment of peanut butter's inferiority.

SOMETHING FISHY

We played this for more than

an hour one Sunday morning. Dead simple: eat the fish and get fatter. Avoid anything that's bigger than you, and try not to bang the keyboard when you get eaten by the shark. Heroically addictive.



As silly as it looks.

THINK AHEAD

Another fiendishly simple and habit-forming game. The idea is simply to score more than your opponent by picking numbers from a line. Once you've made your choice, the line is rotated through... Oh, heck, it's impossible to explain. Just go along and play it.



Just... one... more... game... Must... stop... playing...

BETACALL

Have your say in game development – get involved in official beta test programs

★ Go planet hopping with Shockforce – explore strange new worlds, seek out new civilisations and boldly kick the arse of anything that breathes.

Website: www.imagiconline.com/games/shockforce/
Email: sftech@imagiconline.com

★ WarTorn looks like being a major 3D real-time strategy hit. Although it's standalone, developers Eyst are providing some serious Internet back-up.

Website: beta.wartorn.com/register.asp
Email: preview@wartorn.com

GRAND THEFT AUTO

Mission Pack #1: London 1969

WARNING

Requires original
GTA game disc
to operate



IT'S BACK AND THIS TIME IT'S IN LONDON
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- OVER 32 NEW MULTI STAGE MISSIONS
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www.GTA-LONDON.com



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Age Of Empires II: The Age Of Kings: out this autumn.

Allegiance: winter 1999 release.

World Championship Soccer (Football) 2000: autumn 1999.

GAMESTOCK AND TWO SMOKING BAGELS

Microsoft's annual Gamestock event threw up a mixed bag, and **PC ZONE** were there to catch it

★ US CORRESPONDENT Steve Hill

Grunge, coffee, dubious substances and Microsoft – all things synonymous with the city of Seattle, although it was the latter that held our attention on a visit to Gamestock 99, the annual event where the big M show off their forthcoming titles. The name is a spoof on the '60s festival Woodstock, albeit without the tortured music, hallucinogens or open copulation. Plenty of rain, though, and plenty of games.

Inevitably, much of the shouting involved *Age Of Empires II: The Age Of Kings*, which looked predictably excellent or – in the local parlance – awesome. Essentially, it's more of the same, spanning a thousand years, from the fall of Rome through the Middle Ages, with you commanding one of 13 different civilisations.

Chris Roberts' Digital Anvil team are generally considered the jewel in the Microsoft crown, and the younger, fatter Erin Roberts is currently designing both *Conquest: Frontier Wars* and *Starlancer*. The former is a real-time strategy game of galactic domination, while the latter puts you in the cockpit for some first-person space combat action. Everyone there was

treated to a showing of the trailer for Chris Roberts' *Wing Commander* movie. A *Battlestar Galactica* for the '90s, its release has been brought forward to avoid coinciding with any other sci-fi films that may be coming out this summer.

Loose Cannon and *Midtown Madness* are covered on pages 50 and 64 in this issue, but further car antics were on show in the form of *Full Auto*, from recently-formed,

“A select audience got an exclusive demonstration by Chris Roberts of his space epic, *Freelancer*”

Toronto-based developer Pseudo Interactive. A futuristic vehicular shooter, it's hardly going to change the world, but looks a lot of fun in a kind of Psygnosis PlayStation style.

Microsoft Soccer may have been woeful, but the company's football prospects are far more promising following the signing of Ruud Gullit's *Striker* from Rage. The game will now be called some combination of *World Championship Soccer Football 2000*, but will still feature

the dulcet tones of Ruud, along with Jonathan Pearce and the ubiquitous Big Fat Ronald Bo Jangles Atkinson.

American sports also figure heavily, and 1999 will see the release of *Baseball 2000*, *NBA Drive 2000* and “*Football*”, as in the game that Americans play with their hands.

There was also good news for puzzle fans. Alexey Pajitnov, who invented *Tetris*, obviously knows a thing or two and has now come up with *Pandora's Box* – a veritable well, Pandora's Box of innovative puzzles and stylish presentation.

Microsoft were heavily pushing their online presence via the MSN Gaming Zone (www.zone.com), where they are ambitiously pitting RPG *Asheron's Call* against *Ultima Online*. Also online-only is *Allegiance*, a squad-based space action strategy affair.

And finally, just when we thought it was over, a select audience was whisked to a mystery location for an exclusive demonstration by Chris Roberts of his space epic, *Freelancer*, which drew whistles of appreciation from those present. No screenshots, though...

Conquest: Frontier Wars: winter 1999.



Baseball 2000: April 1999.



“*Football*” (final name TBC): September 1999.



Pandora's Box: September 1999.

Full Auto: autumn 1999.



NBA Drive 2000: autumn 1999.



Asheron's Call: autumn 1999.



SHORTS

GANG THEFT AUTO

Grand Theft Auto 2, one of this year's most eagerly-awaited sequels, looks set for an autumn release. No real concrete details have surfaced as yet, but the emphasis on crime will shift to the big league, with gang warfare and political corruption high on the agenda. Fingers crossed, we'll have more details next issue.

BIRD WATCHING #1

Her melons may be sagging around her knees and her hair about ready for a blue rinse, but Eidos are keen to wheel Lara Croft out for a fourth adventure, possibly to tie in with the *Tomb Raider* movie. Whatever, the search is on for the next real-life Lara to fill the khaki shorts recently vacated by Nell McAndrew. Top choice: Lorraine Kelly... Perhaps not.



BIRD WATCHING #2

And on the subject of interesting birds... After a year in which hunting games have constantly propped up the US games charts, WizardWorks have released *Bird Watcher* in the States. Part multimedia, part game it will be an ornithologist's dream. What next? Bull riding? Too late: two developers are already on the case. Within a year, expect the likes of *Line Dancer Extreme*, *Cock Fighter* and *WAWA Pro Masturbator* – all with force feedback support. Despair.



SETTLE FOR MORE

The snappily titled *Settlers III Mission CD* has just been released, adding three new eight-mission campaigns, 20 extra maps and a handy mission editor.

Railroad Tycoon II is also about to be expanded with *The Second Century*, an 18-mission scenario disc that includes new trains, music and added multiplayer options. Look out for it next month.





Warlords BattleCry will come with a scenario builder.

WARLORDS IV

Warlords BattleCry, the fourth in the fantasy battle series (not counting both versions of *Warlords III*), is going to be real-time. Not only that, but the top-down view is being replaced by an isometric one. Six chapters will make up a new campaign and you'll be able to side with good or evil. Over nine major races and eight hero races will make it into the game, as well as an improved magic system featuring over 80 spells. Release, through Mindscape, is set for October.



Let's hope *Warlords IV* doesn't end up being just another RTS.



Each hero will retain their characteristics and armies throughout the campaign.

BUILD THE FORCE



You must remember, back in the days when you were just a kid, trying to build an X-Wing out of Lego. It was nigh-on impossible unless you had those swivelly bits that came with dumper trucks. Even then, a multicoloured X-Wing never seemed to do the trick, especially with a Duplo brick doubling up as the engines – you could usually do better with bulldog clips. Anyway, 20 years on, Lego are finally releasing a multitude of sets based on the classic *Star Wars* trilogy and the new prequel. We suggest you pop down to Toys R Us and leave the kids at home with those shite new Action Men.

"Give us a hand, you old bastard."

TEAM TALK

A quick chat with the part-timers who make games, not for money, but for love



Who are you, and what are you working on?

Blake Robinson, manager of Blackmoon Development (<http://www.converted2.com/bmd>). We're working on our first project, a sequel to *Quake II*, called *Quake II Insurrection*. It's a total conversion with new enemies, weapons and both single and multiplayer levels. You'll need the full version of *Quake II* to play it. Previously, we started work on a *Starship Troopers* TC for the original *Quake*, and my own pet project is a *Quake II* mod that lets two players deathmatch on one PC – an early version is already available.

How many people are working on the project, and where is everyone based?

There are 17 people currently in the development team, all from various parts of Europe and America. They have been split up into groups, with one person being assigned the duty of organising the others.

I'm the manager, working from England. I'm also working on the programming design, graphics, 3D modelling, sound (especially music) and mapping.

Charles 'Psyko' Pence, our main programmer, is my second in command. He's from America, which means I have to stay up ridiculously late just to talk to him via ICQ.

Eric 'Stupidmop' Thibodeau is the story developer. He's the one who came up with the brilliant *Insurrection* storyline, which I can't give away!

Damian 'Hacker' Nikodem is the main level editor. He's been working on quite a few decent levels for *Insurrection*.

Richard 'Gul'dan' Thompson is the chief beta tester and he's responsible for making sure *Insurrection* is as bug-free as possible.

What do you do for a living, and how much time do you devote to *Insurrection*?

I'm a student in my last year of school. I'm already working on my AS level computing course (I took my GCSE exam in IT a year early). I spend most of my free time on *Insurrection* – about an hour a night on weekdays and about five or six hours at the weekend. It's not as much as I'd like to spend, but hey, my education comes first!

When will it be finished?

The deadline for the full, finished article is late April. However, we already have an early demo of the multiplayer game available via our website, with single-player missions available soon.

What are your hopes for *Insurrection*?

We're hoping that *Insurrection* will be remembered as the best sequel to *Quake II*. Stupidmop, my story editor, has come up with an idea so good that we feel it's even better than *Quake II*'s storyline! The other reasons why we're creating *Insurrection* are to try to link together *Quake* and *Quake II*'s storylines and to get ourselves recognised as serious game developers.

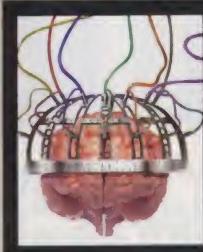
What would be your ideal job in the games industry?

My ideal job would be to work alongside the big game developers. I'm not too sure about what I'd do. I'm generally good at most computer things – level editing, 3D modelling/animation, programming – but if I had to pick one, it would probably have to be 3D modelling.

What game are you most looking forward to, and why?
Ooh... that's a hard one! If I had to pick one particular game, it would have to be *Quake III Arena*. iD managed to push 3D gaming to the edge with *Quake* and *Quake II* – it will be interesting to see what they can do in *Quake III Arena*.



As well as loads of new weapons, how about an Unreal-style torch?



TECHHEAD

News on Sony's next-gen console, plus all the latest PC hardware happenings

★ BUZZING Warren Chrismas

SONY'S PC KILLER?

New PlayStation claimed to be three times more powerful than a Pentium III

Following months of industry speculation, Sony Computer Entertainment have finally revealed the technical specifications of the successor to their 50 million-selling PlayStation games console. And the new machine is looking very, very powerful indeed.

The as yet unnamed console is to be based around a 128-bit processor - dubbed the 'Emotion Engine' - running at 300MHz. According to Sony the processor, developed in conjunction with Toshiba at a cost of around \$84 million (£52 million), is three times faster than a Pentium III. The console's 150MHz 'Graphics Synthesizer', meanwhile, is said to be capable of drawing a staggering 75 million polygons per second.

Sony claim that the next-generation PlayStation "has at its heart a CPU with data processing capabilities far exceeding those of today's state-of-the-art PCs, and a rendering processor that has a greater performance than that of the highest level graphics workstations". This, according to Executive Vice President Ken Kutaragi, will help the company create "a new form of computer entertainment that incorporates music and movies".

No launch dates or prices have yet been announced for the new console, although it is expected to be available in Japan before March of next year (probably in December this year) priced at under 50,000 Yen (£260), with an American and European launch expected in autumn 2000.

The console will utilise a DVD-ROM drive and feature an MPEG2 decoder chip, but Sony have not confirmed whether the machine will be capable of playing standard DVD movies. Nor will they confirm whether the console will feature an integrated modem.



Sony showed off various tech demos in Japan, including this real-time fireworks display with motion blur.



That 'bird' from Namco's *Ridge Racer Type 4* looking pretty on the next-generation PlayStation. Nice.

The console does, however, look certain to have numerous expansion possibilities, with the inclusion of PC-Card (PCMCIA) and USB (Universal Serial Bus) interfaces. Tantalisingly, there will also be an IEEE 1394 port. Commonly known as Firewire, but referred to by Sony as 'I-Link', this is designed to enable fast data transfer to and from high-performance digital devices.

The new console will be backwards-compatible with the PlayStation, but will not improve the performance - in terms of speed or visual effects - of games designed for the original console. Existing PlayStation peripherals, including Dual Shock controllers and memory cards, will be supported, although newly designed joypads are to be bundled with the system.

While the specifications of the next-generation machine have impressed all the developers PC ZONE has spoken to about it, some have expressed concern over the huge monetary and human resources needed to produce games for such a powerful console. Tomoyuki Takechi, President of Final Fantasy-creators Square, is reported to have said that there are no more than five software companies who can develop games that take full advantage of the new PlayStation's capabilities.

How the new console will affect the PC games market remains to be seen, as indeed does genuine proof of its power. Claims at console launches do, after all, often prove to be exaggerated.

We'll be returning to look at the 'PlayStation 2' and its likely impact on the games world in a future issue of PC ZONE. In the meantime, if you have any thoughts on it, send them to us at **letters**.

pczone@dennis.co.uk

'PLAYSTATION 2' TECH SPECS

CPU 128-bit 'Emotion Engine'

Clock frequency 300MHz

Cache 16Kb instruction, 8Kb + 16Kb data

Main memory 32Mb

Memory bus bandwidth 3.2Gb/sec

3D CG geometric transformation 66 million polygons/sec

Compressed image decoder MPEG2

GRAPHICS 'Graphics Synthesizer'

Clock frequency 150MHz

DRAM bus bandwidth 48Gb/sec

DRAM bus width 2560-bit

Pixel config (RGB, Alpha, Z-buffer) 24-bit, 8-bit, 32-bit

Maximum polygon rate 75 million polygon/sec

OTHER

Number of voices ADPCM 48

Audio sampling frequency 44.1/48kHz

Interface types IEEE1394, USB, PC-Card

Disc device DVD-ROM

FACTCANNON

★ Microsoft have unveiled two new USB-only controllers to be launched in the autumn. The Sidewinder Game Pad Pro is a new version of the popular pad, now with both proportional and digital directional pads. The other device, code-named Zulu, looks pretty much like a normal gamepad but features a rotating ball for 3D perspective control.

★ Sony are working with the Recording Industry Association of America on software encryption technology designed to deliver online music securely and legally. The two systems in development, which have the working titles of MagicGate (for download to portable devices) and OpenMG (for download to computers), are designed to compete with the open MP3 standard.

★ Meanwhile, Creative Labs have announced a portable MP3 player to compete against Diamond Multimedia's Rio launched late last year. The Nomad features 64Mb of built-in memory (twice as much as the Rio) and a voice record feature. The product is due to go on sale in the States in late spring, but as yet there's no news on UK availability or pricing.

★ Time Magazine has reported that emulation software available on the Internet cost the videogames industry \$3.2 billion in lost sales during 1998. Apparently just one per cent of illegal sites were closed down during the last year.

SOWADDYATHINK?

What do developers have to say about 'PlayStation 2'? We asked around...

"It is rather hard to imagine a world where the 'PlayStation 2' does not emerge as the winner in this race, provided it has great software to support it."

Peter Molyneux, Lionhead

"Where the PlayStation was a dedicated graphics machine, this has really good general processing power too. As a result we'll see more realistic environments emerging."

Demis Hassabis, Elixir Studios

"It was the most historical and significant announcement in the last ten years. The people at the meeting were impressed - even if a lot of them didn't understand what the numbers meant!"

Dave Perry, Shiny Entertainment

"We're very excited by the 'PlayStation 2' and we'll be doing a port of *Daikatana* to it."

John Romero, Ion Storm

"Sorry, dude, I haven't touched a console since *IntelliVision*."

Leveldord, Ritual Entertainment

LARRY IS DEAD – SIERRA CUT BACK



Larry could be chained up forever.

Games and developers axed

Leisure Suit Larry Laffer, star of seven graphical adventures, has been put out to stud. It seems publishers Sierra (aka Cendant, aka Havas Interactive) have decided political correctness wins out. It's all part of Sierra's reorganisation, which includes more drastic cuts, such as three development teams being axed.

Yosemite, developers of *Babylon 5 Space Combat Simulator*, are the biggest team to go, with only a third of the 150-strong team being relocated. While development on *Middle Earth*, the online Tolkien

RPG will continue, the *Unreal*-powered *Navy Seals* seems to be on hold. Dynamix, creators of *Starsiege* (reviewed on page 76) are also losing 30 staff, putting future games in jeopardy.

Ken Williams, co-founder of Sierra, said: "I'm supposed to say something uplifting and motivational to help everyone feel better. Unfortunately, I have failed." There there, Ken.



Babylon 5 is still on for June.



Navy Seals – and it was looking so promising.

REDLINE RIDING



Turn to the side to use your trusty sidearm.

And you thought dispatch riding was hazardous enough today. In the future – at least according to Britsoft outfit Rage and their new game, *Dispatched* – dispatch riding is going to get a hell of a lot more dangerous, with hordes of mutants roaming around the wastelands that separate the city states. Which is where you come in...

You play the role of Pi, a hoverbike rookie looking to land a job with RedLine Dispatch. Instead of wearing an old suit and lying through your teeth, interview methods in the future have changed somewhat. The boss wants you to go out and prove yourself in the wastelands. Get on your bike – as it were – and drink mutoid milk.

Looking much like an outdoor version of *Forsaken*, *Dispatched* is played in the third-person and allows you to use bike-mounted weapons as well as small arms (that's personal weaponry, rather than diminutive limbs). With 15 linear missions and Rage's usual brand of impressive 3D effects, *Dispatched* will no doubt set eyeballs a-reeling when it arrives later this year. Sign here, please...



Incoming meets *Forsaken* in *Dispatched*.

SHORTS

SEQUELS GALORE

Before *Longbow* and *Team Apache*, *Gunship* was regarded as the finest helicopter sim of its day. The third sequel to *Gunship* is long overdue, which is why MicroProse – now part of Hasbro – are working on *Gunship III*, due to be premiered at this year's E3 Expo in May. Other simulations to be out are *M1 Tank Platoon 3*, *B-17 Flying Fortress* and *Grand Prix 3*.

Better known for their board game conversions, Hasbro will also show new versions of *Monopoly*, *Trivial Pursuit*: *Millennium*, *Cluedo Chronicles*, *Risk II*, *Pong 2000*, *Diplomacy* and a puzzler based on Dr Rubik's evil Cube. Come back, there's more: *Tonka Raceway*, *Tetris*... (Enough already – Ed)

FRENCH TICKLER

French outfit Cryo could be on to a winner with *Black Moon Chronicles* – a fantasy real-time strategy game featuring 80 different units, 120 building types and four races. With 4000 units on screen at any time and features including diplomacy and comedy spells (such as turning troops into pigs), it could be a bit of a laugh when it arrives in June.



BLUFFER'S Guide to...

TCP/IP

★ WHAT IS IT?

Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol is the universal, two-layered language of the Internet. All machines online use this protocol and are thus able to communicate easily with one another.

★ WHO CREATED IT?

Dr Vinton Cerf co-authored the TCP/IP protocol with Dr Robert E Kahn. Both are now regarded as Fathers of the Internet. Dr Cerf was the first President of the Internet Society and is now Senior Vice President at MCI WorldCom.

★ HOW DOES IT WORK?

The protocol's high layer, Transmission Control Protocol, breaks data down into small packets ready for fast transfer from the client machine. An identical layer at the server end reassembles the packets into the original file. The other, lower layer, Internet Protocol, handles the addressing of each TCP packet so that it ends up in the right place. Gateways check the IP address to see where the message should be forwarded to.

★ WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT IT?

The best place to go is www.baynetworks.com/products/Routers/Protocols/Bridge/ip.html

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

1999

So you think you've got what it takes to take on and conquer the best PC games players in the UK, do you? Well we'd like to see you prove it. And here's your chance

Prepare yourself for the biggest event the UK PC gaming community has ever seen. Gamers from all over the UK are invited to show what they're made of against the stiffest competition. But we're not asking you to do it for love. Big cash prizes are at stake. Gaming goodies are on offer. Glory and prestige beyond your wildest dreams are but a few mouse-clicks away - if you've got what it takes.

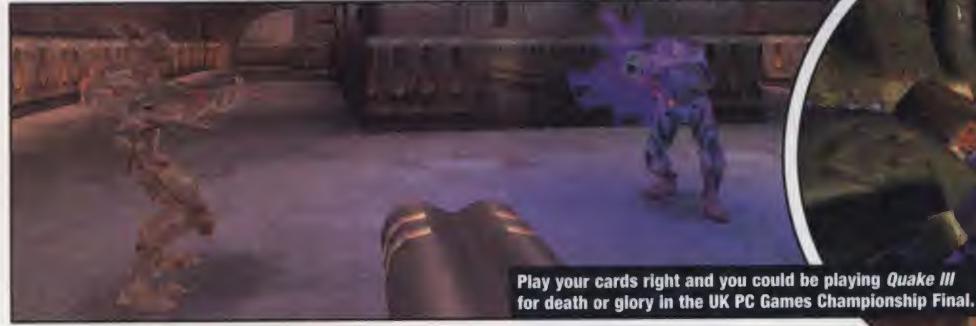
THE LOWDOWN

The UK PC Games Championships is a team event. Each team must consist of between two and four members, and each team member must be 15 years of age or over (those under 16 must register a parental consent form before the event), and a UK resident. There are four gaming categories in which each team will be tested: first-person shoot 'em ups, real-time strategy, driving, and sports.

The Championships are decided over five regional qualifiers, a 'drop-in' qualifier (a five-week period where teams can turn up unannounced and attempt to qualify) and a Grand Final. The winning team from each of the six qualifiers competes in The Grand Final, to be held on September 18 at The Playing Fields Internet cafe in London.

Each qualifier is decided over eight games (see panel opposite), with each team designating one of its members to play per round. So, for example, one team of four may have an RTS expert, a driving games expert, an FPS whizz and a sports supremo, or variations thereof.

Full rules will be released in *PC ZONE* and on the official UK PC Games Championships website (www.ukpcgc.com) in the near future, or you can apply for them in writing from: UK PC Games Championships, The Playing Fields, 139-143 Whitfield Street, London W1P 5RY.



Play your cards right and you could be playing *Quake III* for death or glory in the UK PC Games Championship Final.

THE PRIZES!

Every single entrant receives a gaming goodie bag, regardless of how well they do - no one goes away empty-handed. If your team hits the big time, however, you could be walking off with one of these amazing prizes...

1ST PRIZE

- A brand new PC for each member of your team
- £10,000 cash to share between team members
- A great big shiny trophy

RUNNER-UP

- A 19-inch monitor for each member of the team
- £1000 cash to share between team members

THIRD PLACE

- Voodoo3 cards for each member of the team

QUALIFIERS

The winning team from each of the six regional qualifiers will receive £1500 in prize money. So if you win in your own genre and your team wins its qualifier and then the Grand Final, you'll have £11,500 to share between you!

INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS

Get the highest score in one of the eight games in our line-up and you win a prize donated by the game's publisher, valued at £2,500!

UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY
PC ZONE, Computer Shopper
and The Playing Fields,
AND SPONSORED BY
Microsoft and AMD

WHEN IS IT ALL HAPPENING?

REGIONAL QUALIFIERS:

- LONDON:** June 5 and 6
- BIRMINGHAM:** June 12 and 13
- CARDIFF:** July 3 and 4
- GLASGOW:** July 10 and 11
- MANCHESTER:** August 7 and 8

DROP-IN QUALIFIERS:

- LONDON:** July 5 - August 29

GRAND FINAL:

- LONDON:** Saturday September 18

WHAT NEXT? START PRACTISING!

Basically you've got a month until you need to enter, so until then start thinking about your team - who's going to play what, and what kind of dangerous name you'll adopt to frighten your rivals with. Above all though, you need to practice. Our online gaming experience tells us that there are a lot of good players out there, and you're gonna have to beat them all to take the grand prize.

If you don't own all the games that will feature in the Championships, why not club together and go out and buy them? Almost all of them are *PC ZONE* Classics and are probably now available at a discount price. If you can't do that and if you live near London, why not pop down to The Playing Fields (139-143 Whitfield Street, London W1P 5RY) and practise there?

For online practice, Microsoft's Gaming Zone (www.zone.com) will be hosting practice sessions specifically for entrants, and a number of other websites will also be providing tools such as custom maps, courses, scenarios and 'bot' software in the very near future. Tune in to next month's *PC ZONE* (on sale Thursday 6 May) for full details.

THE LINE-UP

If you're going to win this event, you're going to have to play these games...

FIRST-PERSON SHOOT 'EM UPS



UNREAL (GT Interactive)



QUAKE II (Activision)

REAL-TIME STRATEGY



AGE OF EMPIRES (Microsoft)



TOTAL ANNIHILATION (GT Interactive)

DRIVING



MOTOCROSS MADNESS (Microsoft)



NEED FOR SPEED III (Electronic Arts)

SPORTS



ACTUA SOCCER 3 (Gremlin Interactive)



JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL (Virgin Interactive)



With up to 60 aircraft in the sky at any one time, it could get quite crowded up there.

FIGHTER FORCE

Psygnosis' late entry to the European air war

Nations: Fighter Command is being prepared for a June take-off, and with four established WWII flight sims already on the shelves it's going to have a tough fight on its hands if it wants to shoot down the mighty Jane's *WWII Fighters*. You can join US, British or German air forces through 15 missions apiece, choosing to fly one of 17 fighters from the period. A massive 60 aircraft can be on screen at any one time – even in multiplayer games – but the most curious feature is a teamplay mode called V1 Football, where two sides must defend their bases from enemy V1 attack while escorting their own doodlebugs to the opponent's base of operations. Hopefully that won't be the only feature to set it apart from the crowd.



The Me262 – the world's first jet fighter.

In-air jousting, WWII-style.



Smoke effects on guns... nice.



"Real terrain data" – nothing new there then.

A choice of 17 different planes to fly, and a few ships to fly over.

LIQUID ENGINEERING

With EA's *Superbike World Championship* currently unchallenged as best bike sim after overtaking *Castrol Honda Superbike*, Midas Interactive are set to release a sequel, *Castrol Honda II*, at the end of April. With more rider animations, ten new tracks and shinier chrome effects, it will certainly have its work cut out against EA's officially licensed title. Needless to say Steve Hill can't wait to review it.



New weather effects are promised.

YOUR MOST WANTED

A look at the games you're most looking forward to over the next few months, and when they're expected to arrive

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--------|
| 1 | Duke Nukem 4Ever (GT/3D Realms) | July |
| 2 | C&C: Tiberian Sun (EA/Westwood) | June |
| 3 | X-Wing Alliance (LucasArts) | April |
| 4 | Team Fortress II (Valve/Sierra) | June |
| 5 | Quake III Arena (id/Activision) | July |
| 6 | Kingpin (Xatrix/Interplay) | June |
| 7 | Alliens Vs Predator (Fox) | May |
| 8 | Driver (GT/Reflections) | April |
| 9 | Age Of Empires II (Microsoft) | Autumn |
| 10 | Grand Theft Auto 2 (DMA/Take 2) | Autumn |

WIN! Submit your vote and go into the hat for a mystery prize draw. Email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject line 'Most Wanted', or write to the usual address.

CONSOLE ZONE

The PlayStation
is grey and old,
and it's dying of
suffocation

★ SILENT Matthew Burgess

The resurgence of Konami as a console force continues. After the acclaim that greeted *Metal Gear Solid* the import shops have been buzzing with the arrival of their latest PlayStation title, the eerie *Silent Hill*.

Silent Hill is a *Tomb Raider*-meets-*Resident Evil*-style game set in the conveniently creepy location of Silent Hill, USA. You play Harry Mason, who stumbles from his wrecked car to find that his daughter has wandered off somewhere. The wretched brat has to be found, but as Harry enters the town he discovers that something is (surprise) not quite right.

The action takes place in a true 3D environment. While not up to the standards of *Resident Evil*'s lush rendered interiors, the grainy PlayStation graphics serve the game well, with atmospheric lighting and sound effects (your radio crackles with static every time a monster approaches) combining to create some genuinely pant-filling moments. From the corpses on hooks, to the undead infants that loom from the darkened schoolhouse, *Silent Hill* is unashamedly adult in theme – and scary.

It's not as good as it could have been, though: the usual in-game camera problems crop up, and like *Metal Gear Solid* it doesn't last that long. However, Konami's recent decision to convert *MGS* to PC bodes well for a similar port of

Silent Hill, which will benefit equally from the PC's graphical prowess.

Still, it's well worth getting on PSX, especially as the supply of decent games for that platform is beginning to dry up. Slowly, the PlayStation is dying. It isn't retiring after the announcement of PSX 2, nor is it wilting under the assault of the more imminent Dreamcast. The little grey box is gradually suffocating under an increasing weight of shite games.

With over 50 million PlayStations sold throughout the world, it's inevitable that quick-buck publishers will attach their substandard titles to the cash bandwagon. Perhaps more surprising though is that the worst offenders this month are in fact Sony themselves, with a pair of absolute stinkers. Named and shamed, they are *Rally Cross 2* and *Running Wild*. They're both racing games, and they're both about as much fun as watching paint stay wet.

A quick history lesson: the SNES and the Megadrive (ask your dad) died a death for a similar reason, and the games industry slumped. If Sony want to keep their prodigy alive before the arrival of its big brother, they can't afford to pump out electronic excrement like this. Fortunately, it's unlikely that either *Running Wild* or *Rally Cross 2* will ever pollute your PC. Next time you play *TOCA 2* (reviewed on page 84), feel free to smile smugly.



Silent Hill: atmospheric lighting...



...and some pant-filling moments.



Things often aren't what they seem.



Adult in theme, and scary to boot.

COUNT THE SECONDS
UNTIL THE NEXT
STRIKE



F-22
LIGHTNING 3™

NOVALOGIC®

The Man who KNOWS

PIRACY, THE FRENCH AND ULTIMA INSANITY

In more innocent times, taping a copy of the **Spectrum** classic *Jet Set Willy* – and having to subsequently shoplift the colour-coded inlay card – was generally considered a little bit naughty. However, piracy late '90s-style is a different ball game altogether, as an 11-year-old schoolboy recently proved. **ELSPA** officials were alerted after large quantities of pirated PC games started appearing at a **Sunderland** school. They followed the trail back to the boy's house, where it was discovered that, apparently unbeknown to his parents, he had produced some £10,000 worth of blag software using the new PC and CD writer bought for him by his father. Although ELSPA have previously smashed piracy rings worth over £1m, this is believed to be the largest operation of its sort run single-handedly by someone so young. Director General **Roger Bennett** commented: "His father was extremely upset to find that an illegal and criminal activity was going on upstairs. I think his reaction rather ensured the boy won't be doing it again, at least not under that roof." Perhaps he should relocate to **France**, where retailers have been withdrawing games from their shelves following pressure from lobby group **Familles de France**, whose previous campaign was against the distribution of pornography. Their anti-violence crusade saw the culling of *Unreal*, *Grand Theft Auto*, *Carmageddon II*, *Resident Evil 2*, *Sanitarium* and *Wild 9*, all cited by the association as "profoundly harmful in an era where the unprecedented rise in youth violence is of major concern". Their vice president **Dominique Marcihacy** whined: "We are not trying to play the virtuous parent – children have always played at soldiers – but this is really going too far. We are trying to protect children; it is a kind of moral ecology." **Hervé Pasgrimaud** of the French games industry's professional body **SELL** hit back, barking: "Violence in video games is a way of purging aggression for those who need to be purged. They are calmer having played the game than before. Video game violence can't be linked to violence in the streets. It's not a question of cause and effect." Meanwhile, *Carmageddon II* has also been banned in **Brazil**, of all places.

In the crazy mixed up-world of *Ultima Online*, a player from **Austin, Texas** has sold his character for an astonishing \$521, equivalent to the best part of 350 quid. The wealthy, magical warrior was bought by a **New York** gamer in a deal believed to be the first of its kind in the industry. **David Swofford**, communications director of *Ultima* publisher **Origin**, swooned: "I'm amazed and flattered at the same time. I think everyone raised their eyebrows. This goes to show how passionate the players are in this community." The transaction has sparked a number of other deals, and even **PC ZONE** editor **Chris Anderson** is considering cashing in on his own creation. So if anyone's interested, get in touch.

At least then he might get some work done.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Nowadays games are slipping more and more – like fat men on frozen lard. Here's what's happening with a couple of the many titles that should have been out last year



Now with 3D support, *Diablo II* should be reaching its final stages.

DIABLO II (Blizzard/Sierra)

LAST SEEN PCZ #65

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE Winter 1998

Originally announced back in September '97, *Diablo II* has been through a few changes since we saw it last summer. Thankfully the recent turmoil at publishers Sierra has had no effect on Blizzard and the developers have been incorporating all manner of 3D support to give *Diablo II* a more up-to-date feel, with special effects such as transparency, coloured lighting and fog. The game will now come on four CDs – one for each 'act' – and with five new characters to hack around with (excuse the pun), *Diablo II* looks set to take the lead in the RPG resurgence. Hopes are high that this sequel will do much to address the lack of depth inherent in the original title.

OUT September 1999

SIEGE (Telstar)

LAST SEEN PCZ #59

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE May 1998

If there is such a place as 'Development Hell', *Siege* must be burnt to a crisp by now. Originally seen nearly three years ago, it should have been out early last year. The danger for *Siege* now is that it could be surpassed by Eidos' *Braveheart*, another 3D real-time strategy title where you get to knock down castles with fiery balls and run around *Quake*-style while

managing resources. The game's producer was away in the States when we asked for an update (probably looking for a new job – ouch), but when we hear anything new, you'll be the first to know.

OUT Summer 1999

– maybe



Let's hope it looks better than it did last year.

TICKER TAPE

STARTS++ Both Grolier and System 3 are pulling out of games publishing to concentrate on development.

System 3's *Constructor Underworld* is still hoped to appear in May

++STOP++ New developer Infinite Machine, home of *Jedi Knight* lead designer Justin Chin, has licensed the *Unreal* engine for an as yet unnamed 3D shoot 'em up. That now makes a total of 18 *Unreal*-powered games either on the shelves or in development

++STOP++ John Carmack has announced that the *Quake* source code will be released as soon as *Anachronox* (see preview on page 52), the last *Quake*-powered game, hits the shelves

++STOP++ Forget free T-shirts, the first 10,000 buyers of *Aliens Vs Predator* will receive free pants. The queues are already building

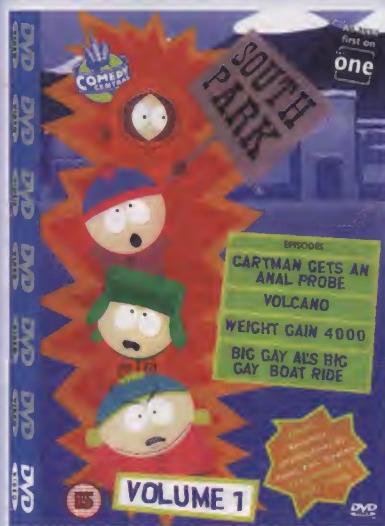
++STOP++ People have been flocking to see the *Wing Commander* movie over in the States, thanks mostly to the new *Star Wars* trailer. According to one review, *Wing Commander* has "the depth and originality of a video game without the fun of the interactivity".

And you thought the games had the depth of a film but with the fun of interactivity. Ho-hum

ENDS

HMV

littledevils on DVD

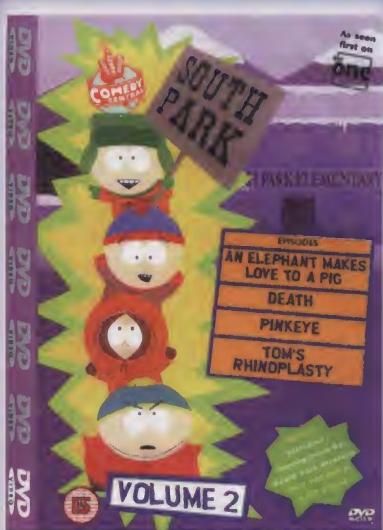


VOLUME 1

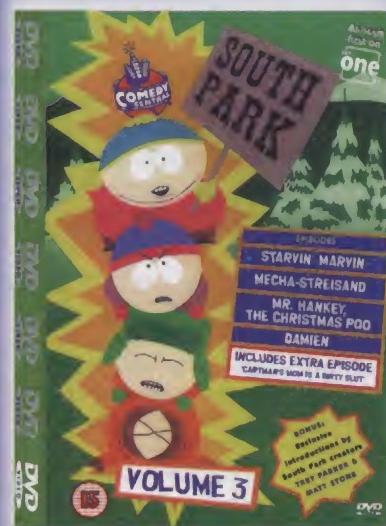
SOUTH PARK SERIES 1 VOLUMES 1, 2 & 3

You can now catch up with the mischievous Stan, Kyle, Cartman and Kenny on DVD. Relive those outrageous episodes including *Cartman Gets An Anal Probe*, *Big Gay Al's Big Gay Boat Ride*, *An Elephant Makes Love To A Pig*, *Mecha - Streisand* and *Mr Hankey The Christmas Poo*. Volume 3 also includes the final episode *Cartman's Mom Is A Dirty Slut*.

South Park on DVD - it's cool dude.



VOLUME 2



VOLUME 3

RELEASED 12TH APRIL



top dog for videos

buy now from over 100 stores nationwide or www.hmv.co.uk or 0990 33 45 78



COLLEGE UPDATE

Interested in taking a college course with a view to pursuing a career in games design? Last issue we explained how, but it now emerges that we attributed some of the courses to the wrong college. To put matters straight, and ensure you've got all the facts, let's just try that again

In the Games Academy feature (PCZ #75), PC ZONE profiled the numerous universities and educational establishments across the UK which offer you the chance to study game design or related topics. In the sidebar - On Course - we detailed the courses offered by the University of Abertay Dundee. This information was correct from the details provided to PC ZONE by the University of Abertay Dundee.

However, it has since emerged that in the main text of the article, we mistakenly referred to the University of Abertay Dundee as the University of Dundee. It's only a very minor error but it may have caused some confusion and we at ZONE always want to ensure that we get everything right. Therefore, we want to take this opportunity to make it crystal clear that the University of Dundee does not offer any game design courses (though perhaps they ought to

consider it...) and all enquiries about such courses should be directed to the University of Abertay Dundee. You can reach them on 01382 308000.

Also, some of the pictures and captions which accompanied the original article referred to the University of Dundee, when they should have been credited to the University of Abertay Dundee. To make things easier, disregard all references to the University of Dundee in the feature we printed last month.

For the record, both universities boast comprehensive courses across a wide range of educational subjects - not just games design (though we expect this is probably your main area of interest). Before we go, we'd like to apologise to any readers who may have mistakenly called the wrong college. Hopefully this now puts the record straight.

ON COURSE

Just to recap for those of you who may have missed the feature, here's a quick run-down of all the courses offered by the different universities. All courses generally require the following: Higher or A Level passes in mathematics or physics. For art-based courses you'll need Higher or A Level passes in art, design or music. Phone your university of choice for full details.

UNIVERSITY OF ABERTAY DUNDEE

Courses

BSc (Hons) computer games technology, BA computer arts, BSc (Hons) computer games technology with Japanese and BA computer arts with Japanese.

Syllabus sample BSc (Hons) games technology. For the first three years you'll study a mass of subjects, including computer games, virtual environments, creativity, programming, software engineering and mathematical modelling. The fourth year is spent on a games development project, personal study and a thesis, plus a set of personally chosen studies in, for example, entrepreneurship.

Contact

Tel 01382 308000/308080

UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

Courses

BSc (Hons) digital entertainment (from September 1999), MSc computing (vision and visualisation) and BSc (Hons) computer studies (visualisation).

Contact

Tel 01332 622221

BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Courses

Three-year BA (Hons) course in computer visualisation and animation, and one-year MA and MSc courses in digital entertainment systems (games and entertainment rides), computer animation and digital special effects. **Syllabus sample** BA (Hons) course in computer visualisation and animation. Modelling, animation and rendering techniques, programming with an animation scripting language, algorithm design and C programming, motion studies, digital media applications and more.

Contact

Tel 01202 595553

MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

Courses

BSc (Hons) applied computing, which includes an optional five-module graphics strand, one of which focuses on games programming.

Contact

Tel 0181 362 5000

UNIVERSITY OF TEESIDE

Courses

MSc computer aided graphical technology applications, BSc in interactive computer entertainment, BA and MA in computer animation and BSc and MSc in virtual reality.

Syllabus sample Computer aided graphical technology applications. Creative design and animation techniques, design principles, high-level language programming, graphical computing environments, digital visual effects, graphical mathematics and more.

Contact

Tel 01642 342671

ON A MISSION

To clarify matters, here are overviews of each university's mission, with details on the University of Abertay's game design-related courses and Dundee's own courses



UNIVERSITY of ABERTAY DUNDEE

Let's get this clear. Abertay run games courses...



University of Dundee

And Dundee do not. Maybe one day, eh?

UNIVERSITY OF ABERTAY DUNDEE

The University of Abertay Dundee is a dynamic and modern university that boasts a long history of providing Higher Education designed to meet the needs of society and industry. The heads of some of Scotland's leading computer games companies have graduated from Abertay, including David Jones, one of the writers of Lemmings.

Sample game design courses: From BSc (Hons) Computer Games Technology and BA Computer Arts to BSc (Hons) Computer Games Technology with Japanese and BA Computer Arts with Japanese.

For more details and a copy of their prospectus, telephone 01382 308000 or visit the University of Abertay Dundee website at www.tay.ac.uk/

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

The University of Dundee's mission is to provide education of the highest quality, developing their students' imaginations, skill sets, talents, and creativity - all of which, in the university's view, are necessary for the ever-changing requirements of modern life. It continues to build on its international and national standing and aims to contribute significantly to social, cultural and economic well-being and to improvements in the quality of life. No games courses, though. **Sample courses:** From BSc Accountancy and Mathematics and BSc Applied Computing and Economics to BSc Psychology and BA Fine Art.

For details and a prospectus, call 01382 344160 or visit their website at www.dundee.ac.uk/



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"So slick, you could
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PlayStation
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Time
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"An essential buy.
A masterpiece."

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HOTSHOTS

And here we are, at the sexy spread of the mag. Cast your eyes over the arousing delights of *Dark Reign II*, *Drakan* and *Dungeon Keeper 2* – then say then you're not impressed



DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME

★ Psynopsis • Out May

After a couple of hours playing through the latest version of *Drakan*, we're impressed. The environments, from Iceworld to tropical, look stunning, and the sense of scale is breathtaking. In fact, if the developers took out all the nightmare creatures, the world of *Drakan* would be ideally suited as a holiday destination. Still, that would be boring. So instead Psynopsis have included all manner of beasts and the means to kill them – 50 weapons, spells, hand-to-hand combat – as well as the ability to ride dragons. We reckon *Drakan* could be the game to put *Tomb Raider* to the sword.



DUNGEON KEEPER 2

★ Electronic Arts • Out July

With *Dungeon Keeper 2*, *Theme Park 2* and last year's *Populous III*, Bullfrog are obviously sticking with the formula that, under Peter Molyneux, made them one of the UK's most respected developers. Not that we're complaining, mind. *Dungeon Keeper 2* is shaping up to be more than worthy of its predecessor. With a new 3D engine, new creatures and a host of traps and spells both new and old, the only downside is that July seems a long time away. Never mind, we'll have a full preview soon.



DARK REIGN II

★ Activision • Out autumn

The original *Dark Reign* is to *Total Annihilation* what *Unreal* is to *Quake II*: more intelligent, less stylish. And with *Total Annihilation II* unlikely to appear before the end of the year, *Dark Reign II* – on the strength of its graphics alone – looks set to blow Westwood's *Tiberian Sun* out of the water.

Using scaleable mesh technology, *Dark Reign II* will show detailed graphics at close range in high-resolution, which decreases as the camera zooms out. Basically this means a far more detailed battlefield view, with the capacity to increase the number of units on-screen and add masses of other details. Whether all this gives *DRII* the edge in the ongoing RTs war, however, remains to be seen.



Cavedog look set to annihilate the opposition

UPDATE



If you lose some units (certain heroes and dragons), they cannot be rebuilt.



TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS

The next fantastical instalment in the *Total Annihilation* series is almost upon us. Jeremy Wells talks to developers Cavedog about voxels, route-finding and wizards

with...



That's one crew off to Davy Jones' Locker.



Magic is powered by mana, a unit-specific resource.

... have three spells. As they gain experience, their personal 'mana battery' grows, replenishing more quickly and enabling bigger spells to be cast more frequently.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Cavedog Entertainment
PUBLISHER GT Interactive
WEBSITE www.cavedog.com
OUT July

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ The original *Total Annihilation* RTS game was thought by many to be better than *C&C*
- ★ *TA: Kingdoms* sports a revamped 3D terrain engine, and new AI and interface
- ★ You play as one of four fantastical races, each with their own weapons, units and characteristics
- ★ As well as dedicated single and multiplayer levels, you can build your own using a sophisticated level generator

When asked to explain why the Seattle-based, award-winning developers are busy working on an 'all new' fantasy world version of the world's favourite real-time strategy game, Cavedog's game designer Clayton Kauzlaric muses for a moment... "I guess we're just geeks," he says eventually.

"Like most people who are into the sci-fi thing, we also have a penchant

for the fantasy and magic stuff. I guess the backbone of all games is the RPG element. I suppose it's just in our blood - if you asked everyone here whether they'd played a paper/pencil Dungeons & Dragons-style role-playing game, I bet you'd get a unanimous thumbs-up. Except maybe from some of the younger ones: if you asked them what a 'die-twelve' was, they'd just look at you as if you were some kind of lunatic."

There is another reason too, apparently: "At the end of the day

it was time to sidestep and refine what we had before starting work on *Total Annihilation 2*. We're not even sure at this point whether the technology is there to do it justice."

FANTASY ISLAND

Just in case you were thinking that Cavedog are taking the easy way out, and simply swapping futuristic units for wizards, knights and archers, then think again. Cavedog have taken the *Total Annihilation* game engine and pumped it up from every conceivable

“Cavedog haven't just swapped futuristic units for wizards and archers, they've taken the TA engine and pumped it up from every conceivable angle”

we just thought that it would be neat to make polygonal dragons," laughs Kauzlaric. "We've been working on *Total Annihilation* for something like four years now, and we needed to take a bit of a vacation from all that nuclear weaponry and high-tech stuff and have ourselves a change of pace. We also felt that there was this enormous pressure to out-do ourselves, and thought that maybe

angle. "The biggest noticeable difference is that *TA: Kingdoms* is in 16-bit colour," says Kauzlaric. "The level of detail we have now is just amazing, and everything looks just great, especially with 3D hardware support. The water laps on the shore and the fog just sort of hangs there. We're really quite proud of it."

Contrary to reports on the Internet, *TA: Kingdoms* won't have →



CAVEDOG ENTERTAINMENT

Formed in 1995 by interactive entertainment industry veterans Ron Gilbert and Shelley Day, Cavedog Entertainment was created to "explore interactive gaming and to create new standards of fun"

1997 *Total Annihilation* (PCZ #56, 92%) is released to much rejoicing. Many gamers claim that it's better than sex and *C&C*.

1998 *Total Annihilation: The Core Contingency* (PCZ #66, 87%) expansion pack is released in April and causes wrists across the globe to blur.

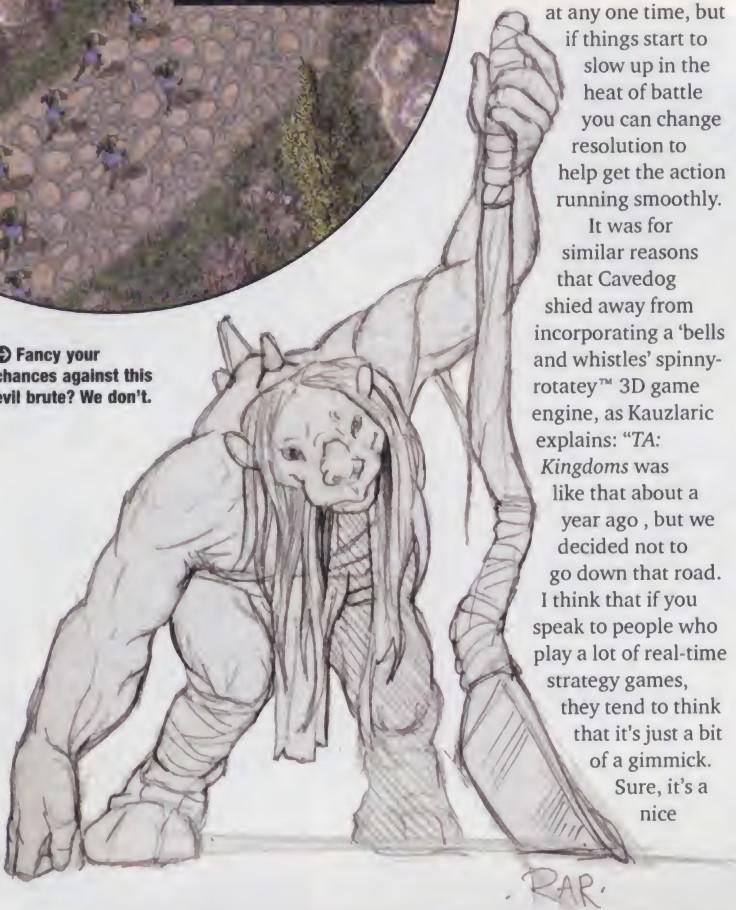
1998 *Total Annihilation: Battle Tactics* (PCZ #68, 74%), yet another expansion pack, is released in July, proving that the world just can't get enough of *TA*.





The roads are a permanent part of the map's landscape. They affect movement rates, so they're not just for show.

Fancy your chances against this evil brute? We don't.



→ a zoom feature, but you will be able to change resolution on the fly. This not only enables you to get more on the screen at any one time, but if things start to slow up in the heat of battle you can change resolution to help get the action running smoothly.

It was for similar reasons that Cavedog shied away from incorporating a 'bells and whistles' spinny-rotatey™ 3D game engine, as Kauzlaric explains: "TA: Kingdoms was like that about a year ago, but we decided not to go down that road. I think that if you speak to people who play a lot of real-time strategy games, they tend to think that it's just a bit of a gimmick. Sure, it's a nice

feature, but if it means that you have to compromise in terms of frame rate and the number of units you can have on screen, then it becomes a serious issue. *Total Annihilation* has always been about massive armies battling it out. If we'd developed the game using a free-floating camera engine, then we'd have had to make too many compromises with regards to gameplay. Maybe the technology will be in place by the time *TA 2* comes out. Who knows?"

ENTER THE DRAGON

As well as spending time making *TA: Kingdoms* look utterly brilliant, Cavedog have streamlined the interface to make playing the game easier and quicker. "You no longer have to flip between menus," explains Kauzlaric. "Now you can do everything using the same interface. We've also incorporated a full-screen radar/map view – you just hit the TAB key and it's all there right in front of you. You can actually play the game this way if you want to, everything still functions in the same way."

Massive improvements in how the game 'thinks' have also been made: "We've essentially rewritten just about all the artificial intelligence code. The path-finding and strategic routines have all been redone, and the units in *TA: Kingdoms* noticeably behave as if they're a lot more clued-up."

Q&A

CLAYTON 'CLAY' KAULZLARIC



Cavedog's game designer and resident chatterbox chews the proverbial cud with PC ZONE

PCZ What's the first game you ever bought?

CLAY Let me see... That would be *Tetris*, for the Mac Plus.

PCZ What's the first game you ever finished?

CLAY I'm gonna have to be really careful here not to sound too geeky. Okay, it was *Storybook Weaver*, for the Mac and PC.

PCZ If you had to take one game with you to a desert island, which would it be?

CLAY That's really tough. Can I have two? Okay then, let's say *SimCity 2000* and *Zelda* on the N64.

PCZ What were the last games you paid money for?

CLAY They would be *SimCity 3000*, *Soulblighter* and *Baldur's Gate*.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight?

CLAY I really should try and sound cool and tough here, shouldn't I? Well, I just can't do it. I haven't had a fight since high school. As soon as I left I sorta grew about three feet and filled out a bit, so I'm not the sort of guy that people tend to pick on.

WHEN FOUR TRIBES GO TO WAR

In *Total Annihilation: Kingdoms* you get to play as four different races based on the four basic elements: earth, wind, air and fire. All are vying for control of the mystical world of Darien. Two are good, two are evil, and each has its own strengths and weaknesses



ARAMON (earth): Knights and archers, castles and powerful weapons of war. They are prone to bouts of campish behaviour, and love nothing better than to dance naked in the moonlight to the collected works of Prince and Steps.



ZHON (air): With the wind at their backs and the fearsome beasts of their homeland at their command, the tribes of this nation bring doom upon all outsiders. They also suffer from halitosis, and fart in bed at weekends.



TAROS (fire): Seeking power above all, the wizards of fire command the creatures of hell, set loose the dead, and unleash destruction. They're also great at card tricks and are available for weddings and corporate functions.



VERUNA (water): At home among the seas and oceans, the people of this island nation have explored the world from shore to shore. They can open distant lands to trade... or choke them off. They also love water-skiing.



While TA used a mathematically correct line of sight for its terrain effects, TA: Kingdoms has expanded to make the line of sight changes in terrain and elevation more perceptible.

TESTING TIMES



As with all RTS games, the proof is in the playing. Which is why Cavedog insist that a select few play their games every second of the day, testing, probing and helping iron out the bugs. Meet Garrett Link, a guy who plays TA: Kingdoms for a living

PCZ How many people work on the TA: Kingdoms playtest team?

GARRETT The test team is made up of eight testers and one test lead.

PCZ What does your average day consist of?

GARRETT Mostly testing, and interaction between the development team and my testers. You know, getting that internal question answered: "Is this a bug or a feature?"

PCZ How did you all get into playtesting, and how did you get your place on the TA: Kingdoms test team?

GARRETT The one thing we can all agree on is that we are die-hard gamers, and playtesting is a way to get paid for what we love. It also serves as a stepping stone and opens doors into development. A lot of us have a game idea of our own in our back pocket and are just itching for a chance to work as developers on our own product. Testing can be rewarding and frustrating at the same time. There is nothing as glorious as finding the one bug that no one else did, and nothing more frustrating than seeing a bug get through to the final product without it being noticed.

PCZ What do you say to the people who criticise PC games for being bugged, forcing them to rely on patch updates?

GARRETT They are right. Our industry, like all others, is driven by the almighty dollar. We strive to make Cavedog games among the most stable and bug-free on the market. The development team here has the right attitude: do it right the first time.

Unfortunately gaming has been taken to new heights recently. People have come to expect more from products than they can possibly deliver. Multiplayer gaming is the prime example of this. Developers must develop not only for a broad range of video and audio cards, but for modern and Internet connection types and speeds. Now take into account that not one or two people are playing these games, but eight or so. That's a lot of packets to be pushing across a network the size of the Internet. It will get better, games will

become more stable. We're just a young industry.

PCZ What's the most hilarious bug found so far in TA: Kingdoms?

GARRETT Well, there are so many funny ones it's hard to choose. A place-holder unit was put in one time, and the developers used a stronghold (a large tower) as a mobile unit that moved about 100 times faster than anything else in the game. It looked really funny seeing a tower bolt across a map in half a second.

PCZ Who in the playtest team is best at TA: Kingdoms?

GARRETT It all depends on what day of the week it is. I can usually hold my own though.

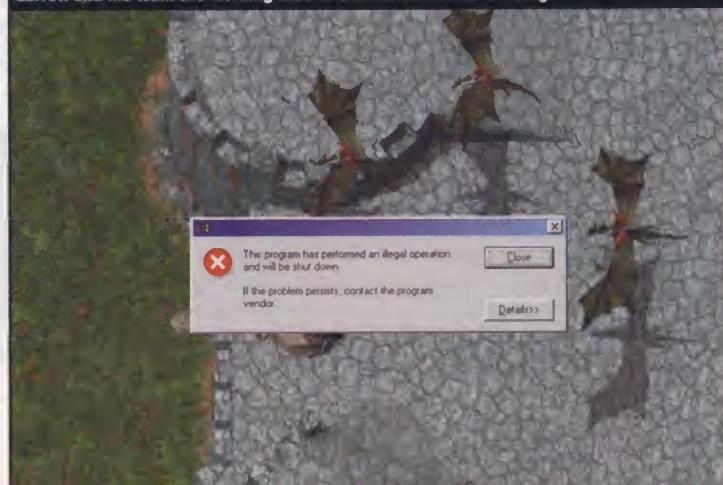
PCZ Have any of the team suggested a feature that has gone into the game that they are particularly proud of?

GARRETT We are constantly suggesting interface features, unit ideas and single-player feedback. It's always difficult to say if we thought of it first, but we do see the fruits of our efforts with each new build of the game.

PCZ Which other games do you guys enjoy playing in your spare time?

GARRETT You name it, we play it. Quake II has long been an office favourite.

Garrett and his team are working hard to eliminate this kind of thing.





Looks like we got ourselves a convoy.



TA: Kingdoms will ship with about 160 different units, with more available to download.



Units will also gain experience to encourage you to conserve your resources. Keep a watchful eye on your basic swordsman and you see him move quicker and perform better in battle as he becomes more experienced. Some of the 160 units in *TA: Kingdoms* will also be expendable; lose your star knight or dragon in a rash act of aggression and you'll play through the rest of the game at a distinct disadvantage.

Kauzlaric goes into more detail: "In *TA: Kingdoms* the state-based artificial intelligence will respond according to the unit's situation. If a unit is in trouble, the AI is smart enough to tell it to retreat. Similarly, if a unit is ordered to attack, it will explore the area until it finds something to engage. If a unit is ordered to patrol, via user-designated

WIZARDS AND POINTY HATS

It's not all bows and arrows and catapults in *TA: Kingdoms*, however. Depending on which of the four sides you control, you have a varying number of mages, wizards and witches at your disposal who have the power to heal, resurrect or even re-animate wounded or lifeless units. And as if that's not enough, there are also deities that can be summoned to wreak havoc on the opposition.

"Each magical unit has three levels of spell," divulges Kauzlaric. "The lowest can be cast with little or no mana very quickly; the medium-level spell will draw on a unit's mana reserve while the third, all-powerful spell can only be cast by an experienced mage with a large mana pool. As a wizard or magical

PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Just like the previous games in the series, *TA: Kingdoms* incorporates line of sight to give it that realistic edge. And like virtually every other aspect of the game, it's been improved.

"It's so much better," enthuses Kauzlaric. "I'd even go so far as to say that it's the biggest single change as far as how the game plays. In *TA* it was really subtle, but in *Kingdoms* we've intentionally exaggerated what you can see, purely for the sake of gameplay. You can watch an archer climb a hill, and see the world open up in front of you; from the top of a cliff you

can see around six times further. It really opens up the game. Hills become strategically important because of the increase in range they give your weaponry. In testing, we've had players fight over a certain hill a dozen times because it's so crucial."

Cavedog have also taken steps to ensure that 'build and rush' tactics are less effective: "We've purposely made it much easier to fortify your base and protect it from attacks earlier on. In a word, it's all down to walls. You can protect your base straight away, safe in the knowledge that lower-level units such as archers and swordsmen won't be able to run in and



You begin playing one of the four monarchs. Like your commander in *TA*, the monarch is your centre-piece, capable of building and fighting. If he's killed it's game over.

“Some of the units will be expendable; lose your star knight or dragon in a rash act of aggression and you'll be at a disadvantage for the rest of the game”

waypoints, it will do so until it finds something to attack. As well as opposition forces, there will also be wandering monsters and random events in both the single-player and multiplayer games to make sure that things are kept buzzing."

character becomes more experienced, then his or her mana 'battery' grows, enabling them to cast bigger spells more frequently. All four civilisations use magic, but while the 'good' kingdoms up the ante with gunpowder, the evil units use sorcery."

wipe you out. If your opponent wants to get at you he'll have to develop catapults and magic."

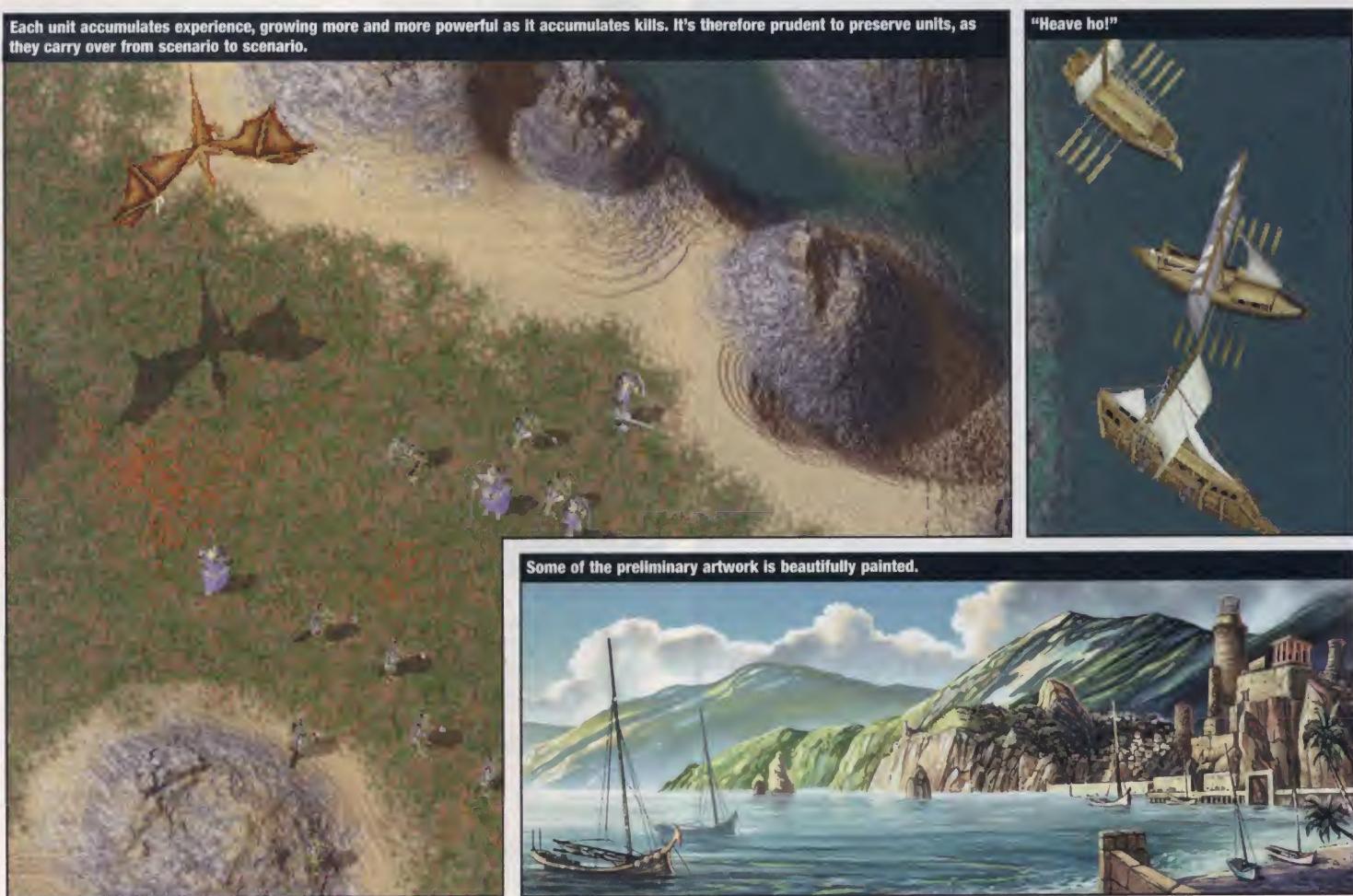
END GAME

TA: Kingdoms is undoubtedly an ambitious and potentially enthralling prospect for RTS fans, and Cavedog are confident that they can bring something new and exciting to what is already a very crowded genre. Kauzlaric is very much aware that *TA: Kingdoms* will be compared to a certain other RTS game currently being developed in Las Vegas. "I'm sure that the guys at Westwood will do a good job, but we just want to do something a little different," he confesses. "I don't really know much about voxels, but they strike me as being something of a stop-gap technology. I know that polygons can be something of a frame rate hog, but once you've paid for it you can do anything with it. It's like a puppet – you can do what you want, it doesn't cost any more."

The fact that the recommended spec for *TA: Kingdoms* is in the region of a P200 with 64Mb of RAM could be in Westwood's favour. But as is always the case, if you want to play the latest and best games you're going to have to fork out for the kit. From what we've seen so far, the price of a couple of extra memory SIMMS seem to be a small price to pay. **PCZ**



Some units, particularly the undead creatures who can be harmed only by magical attacks, have immunity to certain forms of attack.



Some of the preliminary artwork is beautifully painted.



"Heave ho!"





Nice arse! He must work out.



"Get out of your car and drink your milk."

A shady place,
probably the scene of
some wrongdoing.

Hold tight, it's LOOSE

Burning, looting, driving, shooting... Sounds like a lot of fun. **Steve Hill** lets one loose

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Digital Anvil
PUBLISHER Microsoft
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com
OUT Spring 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Blend of genres
- ★ Real-world logic
- ★ Broad range of choices
- ★ Open-ended mission structure

Violent crime in a futuristic USA may not be the most original of game scenarios, but then neither is casting the player as a mercenary bounty hunter with an arsenal of hi-tech weaponry and a fancy car. In fact, as plots go it's almost up there with 'Rutger Hauer to star as cyber-punk from the future...' or any of the legions of straight-to-video banalities. However, very few games claim to be fragile explorations of the human psyche, and *Loose Cannon* firmly sets out its stall from the off. As producer/director Tony Zurovec says: "It's very much an action adventure in every sense of the word."

Which may confuse you. Not just because 'action adventure' is two words, but also because a casual perusal of the shots here might have led you to assume that the game is yet

another driving game. "Not necessarily so," says Tony. "I don't consider it a driving game at all, as ironic as that may seem. And the reason is, what the game really tries to do is focus on choice; it tries to present you with a lot of different situations and a lot of different tools with which you can accomplish your objectives within that scenario. And as a result, a car is just one more tool."

"Some people will opt to spend \$40,000 on a sports car that goes really fast. The penalty for that is gonna be that those cars won't have very strong armour, they won't be able to take very many hits, and you won't be able to mount very many weapons on them. Other players will invest in more stealthy weapons: sniper rifles, silencers, infra-red goggles, detonation packs, things of that nature."

WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD

Stealth is rapidly becoming one of the most overused features in games, and *Loose Cannon* looks like it's no exception. Correct?

"That's really up to you in terms of how exactly you want to play. Realistically, it's not a game where you drive through the main gates and just start shooting, because you're only allowed to take a few hits. It's very conventional in that sense - you can't take 50 bullet shots; you can take one or two, if you get a bulletproof vest maybe three or four, but then you're dead. So if you drive into the middle of a big terrorist base and you have eight guys shooting at you, you're gonna be dead in a split second. There's no weapon or vehicle you could ever get that will make you so powerful that you can ever act stupidly. It's more representative of real life in terms of having to think smart. Some mission objectives will only involve you taking out three cars, and maybe you can get a little bit crazier there, but in general you really have to think about what you're trying to accomplish; what your



DIGITAL ANVIL

Formed only fairly recently, DA haven't actually troubled the retailers yet. However, here's a look into the future

1999 *Starlancer* is very much in the mould of *Wing Commander*.

1999 *Conquest: Frontier Wars* is more space gubbins, but with an RTS slant.

2000 The epic *Freelancer* becomes the game Chris Roberts always wanted to make.

CANNON

particular strengths and weaknesses are at that particular time, and use those to your best advantage. If you're gonna take on 50 guys, you have to use your brains to actually figure out how to do it. As such, I think that stealth will become a major factor in the game for a lot of missions."

BURN, BABY, BURN

Extreme violence also appears to be a major factor, something that happy-clappy Microsoft have raised an eyebrow about. Tony is adamant that

computer game. It really doesn't mean anything more than that."

We couldn't agree more, although *Loose Cannon* does employ a fairly stringent moral code, as Tony explains: "The reality is, if you really had no repercussions to your actions you could do whatever you want. What we've done is put in place systems where, just like in real life, you'll be punished

"We've put in place systems where, just like in real life, you'll be punished if you do the wrong thing. If you wind up stealing cars, running innocent people down and so on, the police will pursue you"

LOOSE CANNON PRODUCER/DIRECTOR TONY ZUROVEC

they won't be allowed to tamper though: "No, it won't be toned down."

Really? You've got people being burnt alive here. They're going to be charred beyond recognition.

"Yes, there will be some charring going on. In general, there's the capability for quite a bit of violence. In the end this is all just escapism. It's fun, and you should take it as a

if you do the wrong thing. If you wind up stealing cars, running innocent people down and so on, then the police, who are normally fairly docile, will pursue you. You went against the rules. But it is an option."

Which is nice, because as we all know, breaking the law is cool. As is *Loose Cannon*, by the looks of it. Bring it on. **PCZ**



TONY ZUROVEC



The producer/director of *Loose Cannon*, Tony previously worked on *Ultima VII and VIII*, and *Crusader: No Remorse* and its sequel, *No Regret*

PCZ But if you had a gun to your head and you had to name the best game you've ever played?

TONY I'd probably say that the one I got the most play value out of would be *Command & Conquer*.

PCZ What was the last game you paid money for?

TONY Probably *Falcon 4.0*.

PCZ Have you ever had a fight in real life?

TONY Not in about 20 years.

PCZ Can you remember it?

TONY Er, sure.

PCZ What happened?

TONY I won.

PCZ Did you? How come? What was the situation?

TONY Just a silly stupid thing in, like, elementary school. That's about the only fight I've ever been in.

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

TONY It was back on the predecessor to the Atari 2600, where you had seven games. There was a basketball one, a *Pong* and a few other varieties. Some of the biggest influences were things like *Castle Wolfenstein*. *Auto Duel* was a direct inspiration for this game – that's considerably later, roughly 1984/85.

PCZ What would you say is the best game you've ever played?

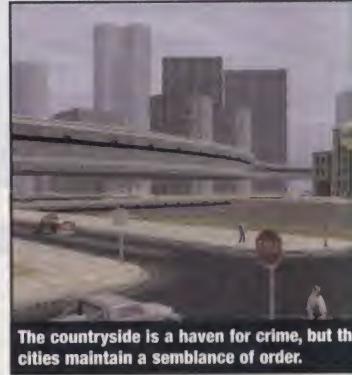
TONY I usually avoid superlatives like that. You'd have to quantify it in terms of genre.



Break the law, and the busies will be all over you like a cheap suit.



"Houston, we have a problem. The lights have all gone out."



The countryside is a haven for crime, but the cities maintain a semblance of order.



The police are on constant lookout. So don't break the law (unless it's strictly necessary).

What's in the box?

ANACHRONOX

Apparently it means 'poison from a previous time'. But here's Steve Hill anyway



The red light district, jam-packed full of whooers.



The gang's all here, including Stacks, a lackey robot.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Ion Storm
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
WEBSITE www.ionstorm.com
OUT October

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- 100 levels, 150 monsters, 450 NPCs
- You can design your own worlds
- Quake II engine pushed to its limits (again)
- Comes on two CDs

“If Tom Hall has his way, *Anachronox* should be on a par with Hollywood in terms of drama and emotion – an aspect sorely lacking in games, bar a few exceptions”

CV



ION STORM

They certainly give it the large one, but in terms of games released they actually have very little to show for it

1996 *Dominion: Storm Over Gif 3* (PCZ #67, 43%). An unspectacular start with this real-time strategy affair resurrected from 7th Level to burn an option. The general consensus was that they should have burned the game.

It's an ostentatious aim, but it's also one that Jake Hughes, the producer of *Anachronox*, is adamant about: "We're trying to crack Squaresoft's skull. That's our goal."

Squaresoft are, of course, the developers of the epic *Final Fantasy* series, the RPG of choice for legions of gamers. Attempting to better it is an ambitious move, but

Anachronox is an ambitious game. Using the *Quake II* engine, it's an epic 3D sci-fi/action role-playing affair set over 12 planets and three dimensions. The story is the work of a madman, and loosely involves a space detective attempting to discover why the universe is folding in on itself.

That madman is the game's designer, Tom Hall, whose CV includes *Doom* (PCZ #13, 96%), *Rise Of The Triad* (PCZ #56, 82%) and the yet to be released *Prey*, a project that he left to found Ion Storm. Despite a heavy cold, he chatted to PC ZONE about the inspiration behind *Anachronox*.

"The console RPGs are a big influence just from their strong focus on story," he began. "For instance, in *Chrono Trigger*, near the end you're sitting around with your friends – or the characters are – and they're talking about regret. In a game where characters would be talking about something as interesting and subtle as regret, as opposed to clubbing people over the head and taking their gold, it's kind of a different approach. It just makes the fighting and the adventuring and stuff so much deeper when there's actually a reason for doing it."

CAMERA, MAN

Anachronox will feature an extremely advanced camera system, giving the game a consistently dramatic feel; something that Tom – who has acted in theatres – is particularly keen on.

"I just like a constant sense of reality, because if you're in a game and you see this great rendered cinematic and then all of a sudden you're in a tile game, there's this jarring point. Even if you watch kids' cartoons they're

choppy and awful, but it's a constant level of reality, so you can sort of forget it and just believe in it and watch what's going on. And that's what we're trying to accomplish here. We're trying to make the engine good enough so that all the action can take place in it, and then just tell the story in the same level of reality, so there's not that jarring spin into a battle room or sudden change in resolution."

The game will feature umpteen elaborate battles though, and like most things at Ion Storm they will apparently be cool.

"What's going to be cool about the battles is that you actually use the environment. Say some dudes are standing on a bridge – you could take aim at the bridge switch and drop them into the water. If there's a stack of crates and if a character's strong enough, they can push them over on to the enemy."

UPDATE

SHINY UNHAPPY PEOPLE

Anachronox features seven main characters, of which up to three can be controlled at any one time. They're not exactly a barrel of laughs though, as



A big gun, by the looks of it.

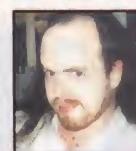


The characters Stiletto and Grumpo, the latter sporting gaming's finest chin glove.

Some of the game is in black-and-white. The reason is a secret, but the decision was made a good year and a half before the film *Pleasantville*.

Q&A

TOM HALL



The President, lead game designer, and co-founder of developers Ion Storm builds a 'castle of chat'

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

TOM That would be *Sea Wolf*.

PCZ What was the last game you paid money for?

TOM I just bought *Baldur's Gate*.

PCZ What's the best game you've ever played?

TOM I guess that would probably have to be *Wizardry*.

PCZ Have you ever had a fight, and if so what happened?

TOM Yeah, I had a fight once back when I was just a kid. It was Halloween, and I think someone had been throwing eggs at me or something.



Hold on, Superman's arrived.

Tom explains: "Each of the characters has something they're trying to resolve – something in their past or something that they just want to do in life. And throughout the story they either resolve it or they don't, and a lot of that depends on decisions you make. It's not a happy 'let's all save the galaxy' kind of party that you're gonna be accruing, it's gonna be people that have their own agendas and know what they want to do. At one point the party can decide to do something that so offends one of its members that they just leave the game altogether."

"I want this to be fairly emotional. At the start it's gonna be light-hearted and you sort of get used to the people, but at a certain point it's just gonna turn dark and get darker and darker. People will betray you and people will die, and you care because you've hung out with these people for 30 hours and you want to see what happens to them. There will be a way to have the cool ending, where everything gets resolved and everyone's happy – the Hollywood ending."

BURN, HOLLYWOOD, BURN

If Tom has his way, *Anachronox* should be on a par with Hollywood in terms of drama and emotion – an aspect sorely

lacking from games, barring a few notable exceptions.

"*Final Fantasy* was really awesome and dramatic, but it didn't have that intimate drama. I mean, occasionally there were certain emotional points, like Red 13's story, but I want real drama to come out of this. We're using vertex deformation so you can actually have expression in people's characters, rather than just having the person's head bobbing while the speech is going on. We're gonna have their lips moving to the speech, and expressions in their face, so they'll look from side to side if they're worried, and they'll look downhearted when they're downhearted, and so on. With that ability it's going to make that much more emotion come out of the cinematics, and with the natural movement it's gonna be a very interesting experiment in seeing if we can make people really get emotionally upset at a video game. I think Electronic Arts said in the '80s: 'Can they make you cry?' We're gonna try our best."

It's a commendable endeavour, and from what we've seen it's one they could feasibly achieve. However, it's Eidos who'll be crying if Ion Storm don't finish a game soon. □

Start the car... OFFICIAL FORMULA ONE RACING



There's a big crowd in. Let's hope it doesn't escalate into ugly, wanton violence.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Lankhor
PUBLISHER Video System (distributed by Eidos)
WEBSITE www.eidos.com
OUT May

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Supported by the official FOA licence
- ★ Features both arcade and simulation modes
- Realistic and changeable weather conditions
- No 3D card required

And they're off! The battle of the official F1 games commences. Buffing his helmet: Steve Hill

In the immortal words of Brian Moore: "It's up for grabs now!" The official Formula One licence has been thrown open to the floor, with a flurry of publishers scrambling for a piece of the lucrative F1 pie.

One of the first off the grid is Japanese publisher Video Systems, whose three-year deal with Eidos Interactive for an official FOA licence allows them to co-produce a game based on the FIA World Championship. Several high-powered meetings and focus groups later, the name *Official Formula One Racing* was decided upon. The game is being developed by French outfit Lankhor.

WHAT YOU SEE...

Until now, licences were granted on an exclusive basis only, latterly to Psygnosis, who still managed to get into all manner of legal mither over some vague technicality. The licence is still something of a judicial

minefield – demonstrated by the fact that every screenshot on this page had to be approved for publication by the FOA. It's a farce – although, on the plus side, we did manage to bring an Eidos PR executive to the verge of a nervous breakdown by sporadically hitting 'Print Screen' during a recent demonstration of the game. However, *PC ZONE* is a bastion of honesty and

Darren Hedges, producer of *Official Formula One Racing*, explains the benefits of the contract: "Having the official licence makes a great deal of difference because we have the blessing of the FOA. This means we can use all the teams and drivers in the relevant season."

But with the official licence being openly – albeit expensively –

“It has the most up-to-date teams and drivers – and the attention to detail is second to none”

DARREN HEDGES, PRODUCER, OFFICIAL FORMULA ONE RACING

decency, so the shots you see are the shots they want you to see – although, for reasons unknown, they are all of the software version. However, to quote the press release, the "software version is as good as any 3D card version". Of course it isn't. Otherwise, why would they bother with an accelerated version? A lie is a lie. Forget it. Move on...

available, is there is a danger that the quality will be diluted? "No," says Darren. "The quality is in the execution of the product, and with so many games out there, it can only create healthy competition."

"I have seen other games in the marketplace and I think most of them are aimed at either the arcade or simulation market. *Official Formula*

Q&A

DARREN HEDGES



A senior producer at Eidos Interactive, Darren 'Hedges' his bets

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

DARREN Atari's *Pong*.

PCZ What's the best game you have ever played?

DARREN I don't have a clear choice here, but probably *Civilization II*, *Half-Life* or *Zelda* on the N64. However, *Braveheart* is looking to be the best strategy game to come. *Purely by coincidence*,

Darren was at the studios of *Braveheart* developers Red Lemon when he answered these questions.

PCZ What's the last game you paid money for?
DARREN *Zelda* on the N64.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight and, if so, what happened?

DARREN Yes, I was in a large pub brawl one New Year's Eve. The fight ended after a few minutes, when the police arrived.

PCZ Who's going to win the Formula One title this year?

DARREN Being a Ferrari fan, I would like to see them win it. As for drivers, well, maybe Schumacher.



Get out of the way or you'll be killed.



The view from the cockpit.



Overtake, you twat!

“We felt the commentary was getting tiresome, so we instigated pit chatter and a few other surprises. This makes the game feel more realistic to the player”

DARREN HEDGES



Benny Hedgehogs. God's own cigarette.

LANKHOR
Started out with point-and-click adventure games, and have also dabbled with driving

- 1987 *Mortville Manor*. Involved questioning the inhabitants of a large manor house to discover if a death was by natural causes or murder.
- 1990 *Maupiti Island*. The sequel to *Mortville Manor*. Set around a tropical island.
- 1993 *F1*. Allegedly Game of the Year on the Megadrive.
- 1996 *Vrooom*. Onomatopoeic racing game.

DOWN TO DETAILS

What's so good about it?

“It has the most up-to-date teams and drivers; the software mode has to be seen to be believed; also, the attention to detail is second to none. We modelled the circuits using accurate drawings and video footage. For a few of the more difficult tracks, the Lankhor team went to the track

and photographed them, then modelled them by hand. There has been participation from F1 teams, but I can't say who.”

By ‘up-to-date’, Darren of course means the game features last season’s data. Basing a game on the current season is nigh-on impossible, given the traditional annual pre-season switching of cars and drivers, like some elaborate themed edition of Mike Reid’s erstwhile quiz show, *Runaround*.

Of course, Murray Walker is synonymous with the sport, and his inimitable tones are... nowhere to be found in *Official Formula*

Racing. “We felt that the commentary in the F1 genre was getting a little tiresome,” Darren explains, “so we instigated pit chatter and a few other surprises. This actually makes the game feel more realistic to the player.”

As fans will be only too aware, the televised coverage of Grand Prix switched channels a season or so ago, much to the chagrin of dedicated viewers. So, is *Official Formula One Racing* more ITV or BBC?

“Well, it’s definitely not Channel 5! It’s more like Sky Sports. We’ve covered all the angles, and the presentation is superb.”

We’ll be the judges of that, and

our early look suggests that Darren might not be exaggerating. The helicopter fly-over of each track is a nice touch, setting the atmosphere as well as pointing out any potentially hazardous areas.

The game certainly seems flexible in terms of difficulty – offering novice, standard and expert modes, but also enabling you to tweak the AI of other drivers.

They can behave realistically, randomly, or in one of five different categories, the lowest akin to the back-of-the-grid Minardis and Saubers, and the highest on a par with the Ferraris and McLarens – although if the opening Australian Grand Prix is anything to go by they’re going to have to start from scratch. Oof!



Say goodbye to the city, and head for the... WILD METAL COUNTRY

UPDATE

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER DMA Design
PUBLISHER Gremlin
WEBSITE www.dma.co.uk
OUT May 15

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's from DMA, who never cock these things up
- ★ Superb physics engine
- ★ Poncy sound system that makes it all sound good and that
- ★ The tanks and that are based on animals



DMA DESIGN

As well as putting together *Wild Metal Country*, DMA Design are also responsible for the following...

- 1988** *Menace*. Described in the press as a "blatant R-Type rip-off". Which is fair enough, since that's precisely what it was.
- 1989** *Blood Money*. Another shoot 'em up, this time for one or two players. Described by Jonathon Ross as "a very clever game".
- 1991** *Lemmings* (PCZ #1, 88%). The game that drove the world insane. One over-enthusiastic games rag awarded it a score of 110 per cent.
- 1993** *Hired Guns* (PCZ #58, 92%). Four-player 3D shoot 'em up action on one computer! A precursor to co-op *Doom* if ever there was one.
- 1993** *Lemmings 2: The Tribes*. Disappointingly over-complex sequel to the original.
- 1997** *Grand Theft Auto*. Inspired car-jack-tastic controversy 'em up.

"It's hard to convey in letters and words, but everything in the game just behaves properly, and it makes the action inherently satisfying"



Now why can't the British Army build tanks that look as cool as this?

member 'Uncle Peter', the genuinely scary 'comedy lunatic' who used to pop up now and again on *The Smell Of Reeves And Mortimer*? He was played by a wild-haired comedian with a weather-beaten face who called himself

Charlie Chuck. Charlie Chuck also toured the stand-up circuit; his live act largely consisted of bellowing random words (usually "donkey") in a Northern accent, looking confused, and sometimes turning violent or storming off the stage in tears. Watching him in action, it was hard to tell whether it was all a pretence. God knows what he's up to these days, but if *Wild Metal Country* is anything to go by he's probably in Dundee helping DMA Design come up with their game ideas.

Wild Metal Country is the sort of thing that defies description. Which is a pain in the arse for anyone trying to write about it – such as ourselves. In common with almost every other DMA release, it's a curious blend of up-to-the-minute technology and defiantly

old-school gameplay – a bit like a ZX Spectrum game from the year 2064, if you see what we mean.

The plot goes like this: somewhere near the arse end of the Universe lies the Tehric empire, a legacy of three planets consumed by a bitter civil war. And we mean *bitter*: billions were slaughtered.

Still, war always has an upside, right? And the upside of the Tehric civil war was the creation of intelligent war machines, designed to protect the 'vital power cores' that each side held dear. Unfortunately these machines were so intelligent, they soon realised that letting humans and other living things hang around was a liability. So they killed everybody. Bingo. War is over. Merry Christmas.

Billions of years passed, as they are wont to do, and over time the intelligent robots began to evolve, gradually taking on the characteristics of some of the animals they had exterminated in the past. Not that



The 3DMA graphics engine enables lots of pretty explosions. Like here, for example.



Yup, I'd say that last shot definitely hit the target.



Er... that looks a bit like a cross between *Buster Gonad* and *Robocop*.



I knew a bloke who had sex with a helicopter once. Nah, not really. I was lying to try and impress you.

anyone knew or cared, since no one visited the place – until they discovered that the power cores were still on the surface. And this is where you come in.

Your task is to beam down onto the surface of each planet, scout around for discarded power cores, wipe out the enemy machines, and then get the heck out of there. Well what else are you going to be doing this afternoon? Idly picking at tagnuts and watching *Call My Bluff*? Get a move on!

CATERPILLAR SKANK

As you may have guessed, the convoluted storyline is just an excuse for a bit of old-fashioned 'collect the widgets and kill the bad guys' action. What you won't be prepared for is the action itself. Essentially, *Wild Metal Country* is an arcade-style tank game blending spot-on physics with quirky humour and an outlandish setting. Not so much a *simulator* as a *whimulator*, if you like.

But why should you give a flying one? Oddball futuristic games are

ten a penny these days. You can't turn around without bumping into lunar farming emulators and Martian powerboating games. So what's so special about *Wild Metal Country*?

Listen, the single most important thing about the game is this: no amount of screenshots or lyrical description can possibly hope to explain the game's strongest point – the engine. A combination of DMA's custom-built 3DMA graphics utility and an eerily convincing physics engine turn what could have been a run-of-the-mill sci-fi actioneer into a weirdly compelling arcade game. As we keep whining, it's hard to convey in words, but everything in the game just *behaves properly*. And it makes a massive difference. It makes the action inherently satisfying. It's that indefinable 'dinkiness' – the guaranteed gratification factor – that DMA have a knack of providing.

Q&A

CHRIS STAMP



Chris Stamp, producer of Wild Metal Country, fields a few questions

PCZ What's the best PC game you've ever played?

CHRIS Quake, because it's so immersive.

PCZ What was the last game you paid money for?

CHRIS Diablo. There must be a more recent one, but I can't think of it off the top of my head.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight, and if so what happened?

CHRIS Not recently, although things can get heated up here when you're watching England versus Scotland at football. I'm an England supporter, and it tends to get quite hairy in the pubs. Last time it ended up with people on the tables shouting abuse.

PCZ If you died and were reincarnated as a gigantic moth with laser beam eyes, would you use your new powers for the force of good or the force of evil?

CHRIS (Long pause) I'd use them for my own amusement more than anything else. I'm not sure whether that's good or evil.



"Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to war we go..."



"Exterminate! Exterminate!"

Not that it's as easy to warm to as something like *Grand Theft Auto*. There's an initial learning curve to be conquered – the control system. *Wild Metal Country* uses four keys for

movement: not forward, reverse, left and right, but a separate forward and reverse for each of your tank's tracks. This means that in order to go forward, you have to press two keys at once. Turning is trickier: you can either let go of one button to let the tank turn slowly, or hammer the

opposing track into reverse and make it spin on the spot. On top of all of that you've got a separate control for the turret. Oh, and you have to gauge the trajectory of each shot, too.

It sounds like a nightmare, and for the first ten minutes or so of play it is: you tend to pirouette around like a drunken Dalek, tumbling down slopes and being hammered by the enemy until you feel like hurling the keyboard through the screen. Then suddenly, some of your synapses start to kick in and it all starts to gel. Which is the point at which you start enjoying yourself and getting into the game proper.

Anyway, we've run out of space, so you'll just have to gawp at the screenshots for a few moments longer. But take it from us: *Wild Metal Country* is going to be a lot more fun than it looks on the page. We'll tell you precisely how much fun in our review next issue, on sale Thursday 6 May. **PCZ**



A 3D action game of Biblical proportions

REQUIEM

AVENGING ANGEL™



And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and his angels; And prevailed not; neither was there found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, because he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Revelation 12:7-9

Coming soon on PC CD ROM
www.requiem.co.uk





Another surprised foreigner tastes the bloody vengeance of a minnow-pricked redneck.



You get to blow away junkies and terrorists and everything.



The crime is not being American. The sentence is death.



Perhaps they should've called it Angry Xenophobe.



Isn't Barnsley glamorous?

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Raven Software
PUBLISHER Activision
WEBSITE www.soldier-of-fortune.com
OUT September

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Ultra-realistic arsenal
- ★ Fancy new GHOUL-modified version of the Quake II engine
- ★ Based on a gun porn mag
- ★ From the makers of Hexen II

Want to take part in a quick experiment? Yeah? Good. All you have to do is read the following words and monitor your reactions carefully.

Ready? Okay. Here we go: Guns. War. Bullets. Muzzle flare. Zapruder footage. Heavy recoil action. Trigger finger. Empty casings rattling round your feet like hollow cockroach shells.

Hands up everybody who loves gun fetish mags. It'll make it easier for Charlie Brooker to pick you off with his high-velocity sniper rifle

Charlton Heston. Dirty Harry. Hunting. Crossbows. Guns. Guns. Guns, guns and more guns.

Right. Experiment over. Did you find yourself getting sexually aroused? If the answer's yes, then congratulations – you're probably just the sort of person who reads *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine, the right-to-bear-arms bible of gung-ho gun nuts everywhere.

Even if you haven't seen *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine itself, you know the kind of thing: you sometimes see gun porn mags lurking guiltily on

been turned into a game. A first-person shoot 'em up game. And, surprisingly, it looks like it might just turn out to be really really, good.

Soldier Of Fortune the game is being developed by Raven Software, the people responsible for politically neutral actioneers such as *Hexen II* (PCZ #54, 94%) and *Mageslayer* (PCZ #57, 73%). The company's track record is a befuddling mixture of peaks and troughs in which robust and imaginative 3D shooters (such as the aforementioned *Hexen II*) feature prominently. *Soldier Of Fortune* is the

“The makers promise plenty of ‘over the top’ violence and thrill-a-minute multiplayer support”

newsagents' shelves in the UK, where they're imported from the US. A typical issue has a cover peppered with 'product shots' of phallic-looking semi-automatics, a feature on the National Rifle Association, some survivalist tips, and a wipe-clean centrefold of some trailer park jailbait deep-throating a muzzle. Probably.

Soldier Of Fortune is one of the most established ones. And now it's

latest addition to the fold. Unlike the other Raven titles, it's based very much on the real world – a gritty, contemporary setting that's a welcome departure from the first-person fantasy/sci-fi norm.

Soldier Of Fortune utilises the Quake II engine, and as you can see from the screenshots here the game looks disturbingly realistic. It should play realistically too, thanks to the

'GHOUL' modelling system created by Raven boffin Gil Gribb. This provides more believable object physics in the game, for both wounded victims and pieces of architecture. Furthermore, as you'd expect from a game based on a magazine for gun fetishists, the weapons are designed to look and behave just like the real thing – nail-biting reload times and all. It should be enough to have regular *Soldier Of Fortune* readers breaking into a sweat before the end of the first level.

The missions sound exciting too: enough gnarled, earthy realism to indulge all your *Rambo III/Death Wish* fantasies in one go. To this end, we're promised plenty of 'over the top violence' coupled with authentic strategic elements, support for all leading 3D cards, and thrill-a-minute multiplayer support bunged in for good measure.

The licence is neither here nor there – this game should turn heads on its own merit. Whatever. We'll be reviewing *SOF* in a forthcoming issue.

Now shut up, put the magazine down, and back away slowly. Or I'll shoot your forehead off. **PCZ**

EPIC BATTLES OF STRATEGY AND HONOUR

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OF MIGHT AND MAGIC®



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NEW WORLD COMPUTING

Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT

IMPERIUM GALACTICA II

A strategy game that sounds like an encyclopedia?

Paul Presley goes door to door

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Digital Reality
PUBLISHER GT Interactive
WEBSITE www.gtinteractive.com
OUT July

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- A combination of real-time strategy, resource management and scripted storylines
- Eight different empires with different strategies
- Space and ground battles (in full 3D)
- Proven gameplay, now with state-of-the-art presentation

August 1997. A turbulent period. The world momentarily loses sight of reality and enters a period of enforced mourning after the sudden death of Princess Diana. There is still another year to go before the sanitised pop sounds and rhythmic gyrating of Steps bursts on to the scene. The nation's gamers eagerly look forward to getting their hands on *Daikatana* come autumn...

Meanwhile, a little-known strategy game is being roundly ignored by all but a solitary reviewer with a slightly nasal voice and a ponytail that's far too long for its own good: *Imperium Galactica* (PCZ #53, 90%) – the game the world forgot.

Fortunately developers Digital Reality didn't forget it, and have seen fit to give us a sequel that takes advantage of all that modern PC technology can offer. The beauty of the original game was that it gave you a bit of everything: resource management, space combat, exploration and colonisation, ground battles, and even an ongoing storyline that kept you engrossed in the action and provided a variety of scripted missions to follow.

Imperium Galactica II appears to have retained its predecessor's rich tapestry of strategy gaming and built on it. The graphics are a world apart from the fairly basic visual nature of the original. Fully 3D (with "visuals to make you cry!" according to the press release), *IGII* reminds us of the forthcoming *Homeworld*, certainly in

FIRST ENCOUNTER

the space combat sections, although there does appear to be more of a 'strategy game' feel to *IGII* than Relic's effort, with grids, icons and stats, and a suspiciously 'turn-based' atmosphere pervading through it all. However, we'll have to wait and see whether this turns out to be the case.

Digital Reality have gone to town on the features side of things too. First up you get to design and build your own ships, and trade the designs with other races further down the line for more advanced goods or equipment. Furthermore, in the style of *Civilization* (PCZ #32, 80%) you can discover and research over 150 different kinds of technologies and inventions to aid your plans.

IGII can be played in a number of ways: a full-on campaign mode gives you three separate storylines to follow (with three separate races to explore them with), using an engine that mixes predetermined and random events to ensure plenty of replay appeal; custom galaxies can be defined if you just fancy a simple spot of non-mission based expansionism; multiplayer gives all the expected array of network and Internet options, enabling eight players to battle it out at once; and there are the individual one-off scenarios to complete, plenty of which will continue to be supplied after the game is released, further boosting the long-term aspects.

On paper, *Imperium Galactica II* has a lot going for it. Whether it can withstand the onslaught of *Homeworld* and *Tiberian Sun*, however, only time will tell. But if it too gets ignored, then there's no justice in the world. **[E]**

“*IGII* appears to have retained its predecessor's rich tapestry of strategy gaming and built on it”



You have to manage your colonies as well as your space fleets.



Ships can be designed from scratch.



The full 3D space combat looks stunning.



Some breathtaking FMV sequences help to keep things moving during the campaigns.



HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

Englisher pig-dog *Richie Shoemaker* gets his mitts on Take 2's latest action-strategy hybrid

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Illusion Softworks
PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive
WEBSITE www.illusionsoftworks.com/HD.htm
OUT End of May

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Historical WWII setting
- ★ Combined 3D action and real-time strategy
- ★ Drivable vehicles
- ★ Think *Commandos*. Think *Rainbow Six*. Think *Hidden & Dangerous*

Two of the surprise hits of last year, *Commandos* (PCZ #66, 87) and *Rainbow Six* (PCZ #69, 89), are coming together. Not in a conjugal sense – that would be too messy to contemplate – but in terms of gameplay. Imagine if you will a game set behind German lines in WWII; a game where you control a squad of up to four commandos – British ones, no less – and the idea is to kill the Boche, destroy trains and capture generals. And all in 3D.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Far from being just *Quake* with Bren guns, *Hidden & Dangerous* also features a backpack stuffed to the brim with tactical options. Before you start each mission, you have to make a plan of attack, giving each member of your team specific orders on a 3D map. Unlike *Rainbow Six*, however, where if your plan fails you usually have to start again, *Hidden & Dangerous* enables you to adapt your strategy on the fly.



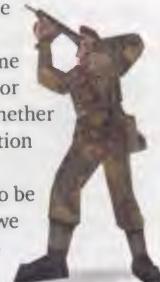
"*Hidden & Dangerous* utilises an innovative system to control figures in real time," says Radek Bouzek, the game's chief designer. "It allows characters to co-ordinate their attacks, as well as use rapid real-time commands. You can simply program the simultaneous attack of your soldiers against a number of locations, and thus create havoc on the enemy base."

Although you could feasibly complete the game from a god's-eye view, there are also the options to play in both third- and first-person perspectives. Characters can run, jump, crouch, crawl and dive to the ground in the event of any artillery fire. Most exciting of all is the option to steal German staff cars, motorbikes and tanks, and make use of any mounted weaponry to complete the 25 missions. And with

one or two shots likely to kill, stealth is obviously very important.

"Players will have to be careful," says Radek. "You will have to act when the enemy looks the other way or when the searchlight is pointed at the other part of the garden. Once the enemy comes under fire it's going to be very difficult to attack even one of the guards. The enemy soldiers take cover, lie on the ground and run away from grenades. AI also enables the enemy to cover important sections, set up traps and pursue you across the level."

Graphically the game seamlessly mixes indoor and outdoor areas. Whether it seamlessly mixes action and strategy as successfully remains to be seen. And thankfully we won't have to wait too long to find out. PCZ



“Most exciting of all is the ability to steal German staff cars, motorbikes and tanks, and make use of any mounted weaponry to complete the 25 missions”

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Gridlock hits the city of Chicago.



This probably isn't the best time to cross this particular bridge.



Drive like that on a public highway and you deserve to be called a raving maniac.

Despite the high-speed carnage, no one dies. Much like in *The A-Team*.

A large truck isn't as fast as a sports car, but it is able to withstand a lot more damage.



California's Angel Studios have worked on *Ken Griffey's Baseball* on the N64, plus interactive theme park rides for Disney.

MIDTOWN MADNESS

Living in the middle of a town can be depressing. Steve Hill does, and he is

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Angel Studios Inc
PUBLISHER Microsoft
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com
OUT Summer

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Interactive city environment
- More than 65km of roads
- Five types of racing
- Wide assortment of cars

You don't have to be mad to work there, but Microsoft do seem to have a worrying obsession with madness. Fortunately not in the form of dangerous psychosis, but with the wacky, zany, knockabout version.

First up was the white trash-pleasing *Monster Truck Madness* (PCZ #65, 70%) – which even spawned a sequel – followed by the majestic *Motocross Madness* (PCZ #67, 91%), which proved to be a thing of grace and beauty. The third instalment in the series involves an array of cars and trucks, and as product planner Mike Deardsen says: "It just continues that great off-the-wall racing tradition. We've got a fun topic here, which is unrestricted racing in a real modelled city."

That city is modern-day Chicago, and it comes replete with fully functioning traffic, police systems, pedestrians, trains, planes, automobiles and even retractable bridges, as well as over 80 accurately represented landmarks. Almost every object – including trash cans (rubbish bins), light pools (lamp posts?) and newspaper boxes (no UK equivalent) – has its own physics, which if hit spill their contents onto the sidewalk (pavement). Full weather systems are also in place, and the snow even accumulates in the winter, clearly

affecting vehicle traction and handling.

Midtown Madness offers ten different licensed vehicles, including everything from a Freight Liner semi-truck to the Volkswagen New Beetle and a classic '68 Mustang Boss 302. There's also plenty of variety in terms of race types: the Cruising mode simply enables you to explore the city; Blitz races are against the clock; Checkpoint races are self-explanatory; and Circuit races involve

Madness, of course, which simply involves driving recklessly through a heavily populated city.

So, can you kill people? "No. There's no blood," says Mike. "Pedestrians always jump out of the way, so it's a good family title too. The focus is on racing, not destruction. It's really a thinking man's racing game in a lot of ways. A lot of it is strategy; it's not just exotic cars. The more you know the city and the shortcuts, as well as your choice of vehicle, all

“Midtown Madness just continues that great off-the-wall racing tradition. We've got a fun topic here, which is unrestricted racing in a real modelled city. There's no blood, so it's a good family title too”

MIKE DEARDSEN, PRODUCT PLANNER

those are different factors that are gonna help you win."

You're clearly breaking the law though, aren't you?

"If you choose to. You can drive accurately if you want, but that wouldn't be fun, would it?"

No, it wouldn't.

The Gestapo.
Fond of peaked caps,
tight leather pants and
glistening biceps.

They'll probably enjoy a good hiding.



GIVE THEM A RIGHT GOOD JACKBOOTING



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OBSSESSED
WITH

EMULATORS

Who needs *Half-Life* when you can play golden oldies like *Outrun*?

Well, most of us, actually. Meet the exception to the rule...

WORDS Adam Phillips

Picture the sepia-toned scene: a world-weary punter sits playing the latest blockbuster and he's utterly disillusioned. Despite playing it for the last three hours, desperately trying to wring some kind of forced enjoyment out of it, he knows that the game is really a load of rubbish. From somewhere in the recesses of his mind, a thought comes drifting through, soaked in saccharine-sweet nostalgia.

"I remember the days when games relied on great gameplay," the thought whines. "When computers couldn't rely on fancy-arsed graphics and sound to sell them. A time when Henry Kelly and Bonnie Langford had TV careers, and when Spandau Ballet were regarded as cool. And no-one had ever heard of that permed twat Jeremy Clarkson."

And with that thought, emulators were born – programs thrown together by enthusiasts so that folk could witness the roots of 'real'

gameplay. Anyone for *Hungry Horace*? The Commodore 64? The Atari ST? It has proved a huge success, even if, nine times out of ten, most of the games are more akin to weak farts than blasts from the past.

The fact is that while the likes of *Hungry Horace* are sitting ducks waiting to be blown to pieces by the sheer force of gamers' mocking laughter, there are some real retro gems to be had. Because of this, the emulation scene has been obsessively embraced by mad-for-it gamers all over the planet.

RAGGED GLORY

Stephen Richards is one such full-on fan. And judging from the list of kit he's owned over the years, he's an obvious candidate for indulging in past gaming glories.

"My first console was the ColecoVision, which I got when I was seven years old," explains the certifiable games-head. "After that, I had an Amstrad CPC and an Atari STE. Then, when I was 14 years



#12 THE EMU NUT*

(*And we're not talking Rod Hull here)

NAME Stephen Richards

AKA The Fox

AGE 22

LOCATION Prescot

OCCUPATION Cardiographer at Whiston Hospital. He's also studying an HNC/D computing course at a nearby college in his spare time

OBSESSION Everything and anything to do with emulators

CONDITION BEGAN Two and a half years ago, when he came across a Sinclair Spectrum emulator and a copy of the classic *Sabre Wulf*

HISTORY OF CONDITION Intrigued by the possibilities of retro gaming, Stephen downloaded emulators for the Amstrad CPC, C64 and NES as well. This led to the creation of his own massive emu website – Emulators Unlimited – dedicated to his new-born obsession

OUTLOOK His passion for emus still has a firm grip. He nearly gave it all up recently, but in the end he just couldn't let it go

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Site News

Feb 24.99
[Editor's Comments Updated](#)

What was once Foxy's Comments is now Editor's Comments. Each week myself (ManBeast) or The Fox will update with some juicy rumours and other comments.

Feb 23.99
[Amiga In A Box Installer Debuts](#)

Jaybee has updated Amiga In A Box (an easy setup for to get the Amiga OS running on WinUAE). He has decided to include an installer to assist beginners plus the executable is about 100K smaller than the zipped version.

Headlines at Pure News

[Wednesday, February 24th]

- NES4PC News
- MAMENet News
- Danji Update

[Tuesday, February 23rd]

- ADAMEm 1.0 Released!
- Mike Balfour Interviewed
- Namco System 1 Emulation News
- GBFan Updated Again
- David Tucker Interviewed
- TKMAME Bug Fix Release
- Ko1910.35
- RockNES Status
- NES4PC Status
- GBFan 1.07f
- MyKiss MSX Emu

Stephen's massive emulation site. If you need anything, you can find it here.

Stephen dreams of an Emu-topia where all his fondest gaming memories can be replayed. "Nice arse," thinks Mario.

“Emulation is not a form of piracy if you treat it properly. For example, trying a Nintendo 64 ROM on an emulator is okay as long as you own the original title.”

STEPHEN RICHARDS PUTS THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE



old, I acquired an Amiga 600 – one of my favourite systems."

Stephen eventually sold his Amiga and bought a then kick-ass 486/66 PC, followed by a Pentium 100. Currently, he's the proud owner of a PII 233 with 64Mb of RAM and a 3Dfx Voodoo card. Oh, and a Nintendo 64 and a PlayStation.

Because of his long history as a gamer, it's only natural that Stephen was drawn to the emulator scene. "My first brush with emulation was when I was given the Coleco Atari

COPYCAT

Whether old games make you misty-eyed with nostalgia or you missed it all first time around, here's how to check out the retro-gaming scene from the comfort of your own home

Think about it: that PC sitting in your living room can be any gaming system you want it to be. From an ancient Atari VCS to a desk-sized Gameboy, no console or home computer has been left untouched by the emu mob. Below is Stephen's selection of damn fine emulators, all of which are available at his Emulators Unlimited website.

A P133 is the minimum requirement but for best results, Stephen recommends a PII 233. Getting most emulators up and running is easy. All you need is the game ROMset in a PC format (Emulations Unlimited and similar websites appear to offer the best selection of ROMs), and the ROM is then simply run through the emulator. The majority of emulators also boast GUIs and are very user-friendly. If any command lines are required, the *readme.txt* files detail what's needed.

Amiga UAE or Fellow Amstrad CPC Emu Arcade System 16, Mame (runs over 1100 arcade titles and NeoGeo titles) Callus and Raine.

**Atari 2600 Stella
Atari 5200 Virtua Super System**

Atari Lynx Handy

Atari ST Pacifist

Commodore 64 CCS64

ColecoVision ColEm

Gameboy GBemu (has Colour Gameboy support)

Genesis/Megadrive Genecyst or Kgen

Master System Massage

NeoGeo NeoMame or NeoRage

Nintendo Entertainment System Nesticle

PC Engine Magic Engine or HU2680 Spectrum Z80

2600 emu add-on, which you plugged into your ColecoVision system. It enabled you to run Atari 2600 titles."

Despite this early foray into the world of emus, it was only two and a half years ago that Stephen fell headfirst into the retro gaming scene, when he came across a Spectrum emulator and *Sabre Wulf*, one of the rubberkeyed computer's classic maze games.

"I was intrigued, to say the least," Stephen says, "so I decided to visit the local Internet café and took a few disks with me."

"After a few weeks I had extended my emulators list to the Amstrad CPC, Commodore 64 and NES. Then, after seeing the first ever System 16 Emulator running *Shinobi*, I decided that I'd like to get involved in the emulation scene, so I got myself an Internet connection."

LOVE UNLIMITED

His love affair with retro gaming led to the creation of his Emulations Unlimited website in April '97. He now spends some 10-15 hours a week maintaining it – and that's coupled with a large editorial team, to boot.

His endeavours have paid off, and Emulations Unlimited is now one of the most respected emulation sites on the Net, boasting a mass of information, with files galore and informed editorials.

So why is retro gaming so damn important to Stephen? "They're special to me because they've allowed me to relive my gaming memories of old. The appeal is remembering the games you used to play in your childhood or in the past. For example, you might want to have another go on *Back 2 Skool* on the Spectrum. Instead of buying a shoddy old Spectrum to relive your memories, you can now simply download an emulator and the actual title – unless it's a copyrighted game. In that case, you would just need to buy the old disks – which are really cheap now – so you would be covered legally."

This issue of legality is the only real thorn in the side of the emulation scene. While some games companies are more than happy to see their old, non-money-spinning titles out there – such as Gremlin, who recently agreed to let Stephen host the Amiga *Lotus Trilogy* coding on his website – others are far from happy. As profiled in our report (*Mario Goes To War*) last issue, emulators are becoming less and less yesterday, and more and more yesterday. The likes of the N64 emulator UltraHLE have had Nintendo screaming for their lawyers – more in panic, we suspect, than in anger.

Does Stephen regard himself as a pirate in any shape or form? "Emulation is not a form of piracy if you treat it correctly," he suggests. "For example, trying a commercial



Sega Arcade classic *Space Harrier*: "Fiercely addictive stuff."

Nintendo 64 ROM [the game's coding] on an emulator is okay as long as you own the original title. If you don't then you're clearly breaking the law, and the piracy aspect of emulation comes into play."

In fact, the controversy over the Nintendo emu nearly lead to Stephen jacking in his obsession for good. His site hosted the infamous software, and he and his team were subsequently swamped with hundreds of emails and queries – there were some

"It would be great if the gaming companies would start working on emulators, and begin selling them legally on CDs with various old titles"

250,000 downloads on the first night of release alone.

"A few of the staff felt like calling it a day, including myself," he admits. "The hassle was becoming a major pain in the arse and it felt like Warez (*The profit-sucking Net pirates* – Ed) and emulation were being brought together – which we didn't want."

A CALL TO ARMS

Stephen's disdain for pirates reflects what he, and others like him, love about the emulation scene, and what its true philosophy is.

"The real people who get involved in emulation are the guys who dig up their old NeoGeo titles and try them on emulators because their original machine is broken or because

they prefer the PC set-up – this is 100 per cent legal. I believe that emulator authors should target old machines and titles, not up-to-date ones."

As for the future, Stephen would love to see the day when all the old games are released on commercial CDs. "It would be great if the gaming companies would start working on emulators, and begin selling them legally on CDs with various old titles. I mean, would you buy a Capcom Classics CD with *Final Fight*, *Willow*

and *StreetFighter 2* on it? Of course you would! Unfortunately, though, old titles are being left to rot. It's a situation that should be changed."

In the meantime, the legal issues are posing a serious threat. But perhaps games manufacturers should be concerned less with the pirates and more with the true fans, who simply want to play games for nostalgic reasons. Unlike film fans, who have had easy access to masses of black-and-white movies for years now, the likes of gamestruck Stephen weren't catered for until emulators came along. Maybe their respect for gaming golden oldies should be explored and supported by the industry, not frowned upon or – worse still – vilified. **MC**

PC FLATTENS N64 SHOCKER!



Let's be frank here. The now infamous UltraHLE N64 emulator for the PC is a stunning piece of software which shows



that the PC can kick the N64 off the face of the planet. While you might be drooling over the prospect of playing *Mario 64* and *Zelda*

GOLDEN OLDIES

If the old classics passed you by, here's some of what you missed out on. PC ZONE asked Stephen to put together a list of his top three gaming recommendations for a selection of platforms to help you get started...

AMIGA

1 SWOS: "Classic soccer game. The best of its kind on the Amiga."

2 Benefactor: "A top platform puzzle game."

3 Lemmings: "One of the most famous puzzle games of all time, and still utterly playable."

Note: All Amiga titles work on UAE.



Super Sidekicks: "Fine soccer title."



Paperboy: "Top concept."



Operation Wolf: machine gun pioneer.

AMSTRAD

1 Green Beret: "Great action game that's better than the arcade version."

2 Target Renegade: "One of the best platform beat 'em ups out there. It's got a great two-player mode as well."

3 Dragon's Lair: "Much more fun than the Don Bluth arcade original."

Note: All Amstrad titles work on CPCemu.

MISCELLANEOUS ARCADE

1 Paperboy: "The conversions may have sucked, but the concept is still a top one. Time for a sequel, anyone?"

2 Roadblasters: "A fast and furious driving shoot 'em up. Years ahead of its time – and Carmageddon."

3 Gauntlet: "The classic title of yesteryear. Multiplayer heaven."

Note: All the above miscellaneous arcade titles work on MAME.

CAPCOM ARCADE

1 Final Fight: "An outstanding beat 'em up. With crowbars."

2 Ghouls N Ghosts: "The classic platform game and the follow-up to the equally celebrated *Ghosts N Goblins*."

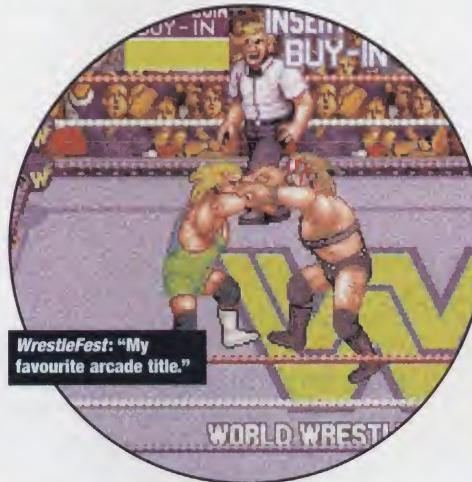
3 StreetFighter 2: "The game that spawned a thousand sequels."

Note: All the above Capcom arcade titles work on Callus.

TAITO ARCADE

1 WrestleFest: "My favourite arcade title – one of the most addictive wrestling games ever."

2 Operation Wolf: "It was one of the first games that required you to wield a machine-gun in front of an arcade screen."



WrestleFest: "My favourite arcade title."

3 Puzzle Bobble 3: "Excellent puzzle game – Imagine a cross between *Bubble Bobble* and *Tetris*."

Note: All the above Taito arcade titles work on Raine.



Back 2 Skool: "Hilarious."



Alien Syndrome: "Genuinely tense."



Outrun: '80s driving classic.

SEGA ARCADE

1 Outrun: "Possibly the most iconic driving game of the '80s."

2 Space Harrier: "Remember that game with the hydraulic seat? Well, this is it. And it's still fiercely addictive stuff."

3 Allen Syndrome: "Overhead action with a genuinely tense and edgy atmosphere."

Note: All the above Sega arcade titles work on System 16 emulator.

NEOGEO

1 Soccer Brawl: "A soccer game with a difference – you can beat up Vinnie Jones. Honest."

2 Nam 1975: "A shoot 'em up benchmark similar to *Cabal* and *Blood Brothers*."

3 Super SideKicks: "Another fine soccer title – one of the console's finest hours."

Note: All the above NeoGeo titles work on NeoMAME.

SPECTRUM

1 Back 2 Skool: "A wonderful and hilarious title – the most controversial game of yesteryear."

2 Milk Race: "A classic 2D side-on racing game."

3 How To Be A Complete Bastard: "Over-hyped, and advertised by Rick Mayall, so it sold by the ton! It may be crap, but it's worth loading up just to have a snigger at it."

Note: All the above Spectrum titles work on Z80.

NES

1 Mario 3: "The greatest platformer ever released on the NES."

2 Legend Of Zelda: "The gaming legend's first outing. 'Nuff said."

3 Metroid: "A top platform title with a Japanese mechanoid twist. Oh, and firepower."

Note: All the above NES titles work on Nesticle.



64 (PC 'versions' shown here), pause for a moment – a massive team of artists, programmers and, dare we say, gaming



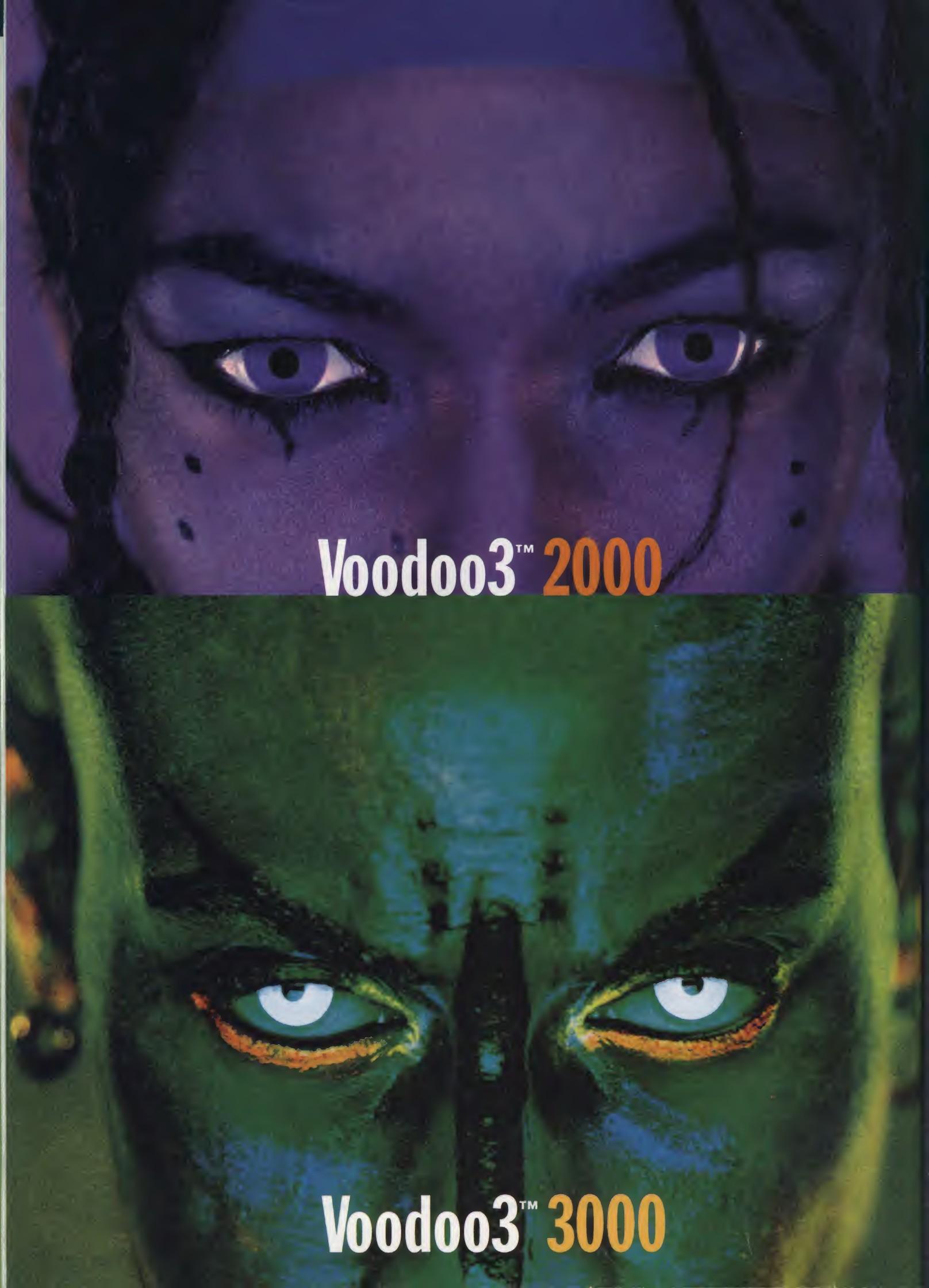
visionaries have slogged their guts out for the last three years to produce masterpieces like *Zelda 64*. Imagine how



you'd feel if someone then came along and stole it. We recommend that you show these images to your smug N64 mates – that'll



wipe the smirk off their faces – and leave it at that. Or buy an N64. Great though *Zelda PC* is, you can't beat a 28-inch TV screen.



Voodoo3™ 2000

Voodoo3™ 3000

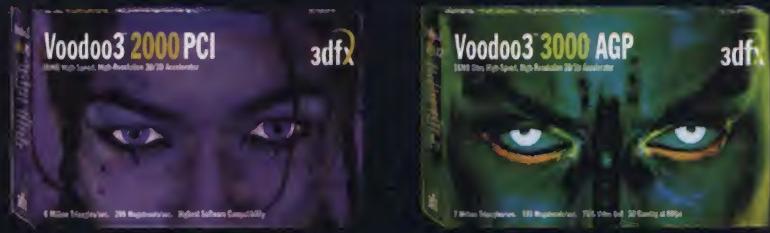
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WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

PC ZONE hits the streets to find out which games are hot and which are rot

WORDS/PHOTOS Craig Vaughan LOCATION West Bromwich



SUE FALCONER

32, student

What's on your hard drive?

"All my course work. I'm doing history and theology. Did you want mustard?"

No thanks. No games, then?

"My kids play games. Well, my son does. My daughter uses the PC for her school work – when it doesn't crash halfway through an essay, that is."

So why do you think boys like computer games and girls don't?

"Easy: girls are more intelligent."



MATTHEW OAKES

18, student

What's on your hard drive?

"Jane's F-15 and TOCA."

So you're a propeller-head?

"Well, I've got a decent joystick and yoke. I love flight sims, and the PC is the only place that does them properly. The computer's a bit of a sore point at the moment, because I ran up a phone bill of £400 last month. I've got to convince my dad that he can trust me on the Internet."



NIGEL HAYWARD

37, Post Office worker

What's on your hard drive?

"Business stuff and Hexen 2."

You like mixing business with pleasure?

"What pleasure? The PC is great for gaming, as long as it works. I've had it die on me far too often. And don't get me started on trying to add hardware. I added a 3D card. Okay it makes a lot of difference, but the hassle! And as for Windoze 98..."



KEVIN ORCHARD

36, local government officer and DJ

What's on your hard drive?

"Championship Manager, Tomb Raider III and a virus from the Internet."

Ah, you didn't buy a virus checker then?

"No. My son's 13 and I only let him on the Internet supervised. I thought that the site he was on was reliable. I won't name names, but if I could get hold of the person who wrote it I would make 'em watch a Wolves match."



STUART WARD

13, student

What's on your hard drive?

"Rally games. Lots of 'em. I got a PC for Christmas and I've been racing ever since."

Do I detect a hint of enthusiasm for rally games?

"Yeah, they're great. I haven't got that many games yet, my PC being so new and all. I've got Bodyworks and some arcade games. I want one of those steering wheels so that I can play my rally games better."



PAUL HARPER

41, lecturer

What's on your hard drive?

"Player Manager 98/99. But it's bugged, even with the patches. It's my own fault – you boys at PC ZONE warned us ungrateful commoners."

Yes, we did. How do you feel about the issue of constant patching?

"It's down to the companies – they're not playtesting enough. It's all deadline, deadline, deadline. Then they start throwing patches around and expect us to sort the mess out."



LLOYD BUCKLEY

21, computer sales

What's on your hard drive?

"Strategy and multiplayer games mostly. My favourites are StarCraft, Quake and Commandos – but I'm stuck on that."

Are you looking forward to Quake Arena?

"God, yes, but I'm not looking forward to the upgrade that I'll need to play it. I've got a PII 233 and I don't think it will cope. I'm thinking of buying a Voodoo2 but money's a bit tight."



STEPHEN CROSS

34, NVQ assessor

What's on your hard drive?

"Work assessments for my students. My PC is far too slow for games."

What have you just bought?

"Speak Write. I'm hoping my days of one-finger typing are behind me. Mind you, if it works as well as Windows 98 I'll probably have to bring it back. Life imprisonment is too good for Gates, in my humble opinion. There's no justice in this world."



PAUL GOWER

34, general manager

What's on your hard drive?

"Home business and word processing. What did you expect? You don't think I got to be general manager by playing Doom all day do you?"

Oh, come on...

"Alright, maybe a bit of Caesar. And occasionally a little bit of that Apache helicopter game. Oh, and a bit of Virtual Pool and some other sports stuff from time to time. Okay, I play games. Happy now?"



PAUL DITTA

28, ex-freelance journalist

What's on your hard drive?

"Not much these days, sorry. It's a bit difficult to have a hard drive when you've had your computer repossessed."

I see. Favourite games?

"Sorry, I don't play that many. I've moved into the cut-throat world of stationary distribution. It's far more challenging than the humdrum world of magazine publishing. Care for a reasonably priced pen, sir?"

PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the ZONE reviews first

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call

Activision 01895 4567000
 Blue Byte 01604 232200
 BMG Interactive 0171 973 0011
 Core Design 01332 297797
 Cryo 01926 315559
 Crystal Dynamics/Ubi Soft 0181 944 9000
 Eidos Interactive 0181 636 3000
 Electronic Arts 01753 549442
 Empire Interactive 0181 343 7337
 Funsoft 01322 292513
 Gremlin Interactive 0114 273 8601
 GT Interactive 0171 258 3791
 Infogrames 0161 827 8000
 Interactive Magic 01344 409399
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 MicroProse 01454 893893
 Microsoft 0345 002000
 Mindscape 01444 246333
 NovaLogic 0171 405 1777
 Ocean 0161 832 6633
 Sierra 0118 920 9100
 Sold Out 0171 721 8767
 Take 2 Interactive 01753 854444
 Telstar 01932 22232
 Virgin 0171 368 2255
 ZABLAC 01626 332233

THE HALL OF SHAME

These are the games that we still haven't been sent for review. This means they're either completely crap and the publishers are scared we'll pan them, or their PR machine isn't quite up to full speed. This month's offenders (some of them have been in our Hall of Shame for some time, eh Maxis?) are...

LULA VIRTUAL BABE Take 2
 STREETS OF SIMCITY Maxis/EA
 BUST-A-MOVE 2 Acclaim
 UBIK Cryo
 REAH Black Friar

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at ZONE pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we've got our Feedback section on page 100. This is where you get the opportunity to get your point of view into PC ZONE. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.

ALL THE LATEST GAMES REVIEWED & RATED

DON'T BELIEVE THE JARGON

The standard spec machine these days is a P166 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the 'We say' bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

PCZONE CLASSIC

90-100% Here at ZONE we score every game out of 100. If a game receives a score of 90 or above, it is awarded the PC ZONE

Classic award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not a fan of the genre.

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

80-89% If a game scores 80-89% it's awarded a PC ZONE Recommended award. Games that fall into this category are excellent examples of their type, and if you're a fan of the genre they're well worth buying.

70-79%

Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-69%

These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre or you see it at a reduced price.

PCZONE PANTS

0-19% Games that score under 20% should be avoided.

They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating, and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.

REVIEWS A-Z

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STARSIEGE UNIVERSE

★ £44.99 • Sierra • Out May 7

It's big in the States but virtually unknown over here. Are UK gamers missing out on the best game ever? Phil Wand investigates

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM, 264Mb hard disk space for Starsiege, and 162Mb for Starsiege Tribes **SUPPORTS** TCP/IP, IPX, modem and direct cable multiplayer. Also runs on Windows NT **WE SAY** PII 266, 64Mb RAM and an accelerated 3D card. Look out for the Tribes OpenGL patch as well



ALSO CONSIDER

MECHWARRIOR II: MERCENARIES

(Activision, £44.99) A more accessible Mech game with the focus more on mindless blasting.
PCZ #45, 88%

HEAVY GEAR

(Activision, £39.99) Not the best robot game by any means, but one that remains a fair amount of fun nonetheless.

PCZ #59, 70%

BATTLEZONE

(Activision, £39.99) Combines action and strategy but like Starsiege takes a bit of getting used to.
PCZ #62, 81%

In the distant future, and the previous Earthsieges games are now a distant memory of generations long-since departed. Arch enemy of humanity Prometheus and his alien robot chums have fled to Saturn, and are busying themselves with another mechanised squadron of death. Better, quicker and much nastier Cybrids with side impact protection bars and magneto-fusion assault cannons were recently launched at the Jupiter Motor Show, so it's only a matter of time before they go into mass production and strike. But hey, who cares? The Earth's forces have been rebuilt and fortified under the guidance of a new Emperor, and are now more than capable of withstanding another war.

Only trouble is, the Emperor is a bit of a plonker. And immortal. Which means that his 200-year reign is becoming a bit of a bind – his demands are cruel, and his policies domineering. Most worrying of all, his new defensive strategy is centred around Earth, leaving the Martian and Venetian colonies wide open →



• The Minotaur, on the hunt for blood and looking horribly deadly. Run for your life!



Trainee HERCs relax by lighting each other's farts.

“Primary and secondary objectives must be met before you can advance through the game, collect your pips and promotions and a wider range of weaponry”



“Come to daddy.”



Light sourcing, gaussian shadows, lens flare, weather and time effects... – in both software and hardware modes.



Explosions are pretty but are best experienced outside the cockpit.

to Cybrid attacks. Time for a revolt – and who better to lead it than the Emperor's right-hand man?

YOU UP FOR IT?

This is where you step in. The *Starsiege* game (effectively *Earthsiege III*) sees you participating in the uprising as either a Human soldier or a Cybrid, er, thing. The history and plot are carefully explained, and you know before you even start that all the nasty pushing and shoving comes to an end in the year 2832 when spin-off title *Starsiege: Tribes*, bundled with the game and reviewed on page 80, takes over. Effectively, then, it's the end of the popular *Earthsiege* trilogy but the start of something much bigger, encompassing several storylines, innumerable missions and a huge variation of combat hardware. On top of all that, it's two games for the price of one, making it extremely good value for money. But let's crack on.

Once installed and running, you're presented with a distinctly low-resolution main menu (you know the type: lurid colours

straight out of a '70s arcade cabinet and jagged edges you could cut timber with) that instils little confidence in the technology. Push your doubts to one side, though, and get yourself straight into Training to find out how to walk and shoot at the same time.

MicroProse's rival *MechWarrior* series, you won't be flashing the lights and honking the horn every time you go to make a right turn – the developers have thoughtfully included the keyboard layouts from both *MechWarrior II: Mercenaries* and *Heavy Gear*.

“You’re rarely left wondering what to do, as your commanding officers continue to bellow instructions into your ear hole”

Because that's all you need to know, right?

Well, sort of. Unfortunately for you battle-ready arcade freaks, *Starsiege* requires perseverance. For starters, although the game is played from the first-person perspective, your HERC is pretty unique in the way it's controlled. You use the cursor keys to get the thing up and running in the right direction, and the mouse to control the gun turrets.

Mind you, if you are used to

A nice touch.

The important thing to remember, and the key to enjoying the game, is that the HERC keeps going until you tell it to stop. And you don't steer it with the mouse. Before you get that logged into your brain, you'll find yourself bearing down on enemy units, firing at them, and then clomp-clomp-clomping straight past as if you've dropped dead at the controls. Then, before you know it – BAM! – you are dead at the controls. Many HERCs are vulnerable to attack from the



My, what a big gun you have.



Cybrid HERCs are a lot more beefy than their Human counterparts.

WALKTHROUGH

PREPARE FOR ACTION!

How to kick ass



2 The Bulletin Board System. Check it out to see what's going on – It keeps you up to speed on the various goings on in and around the solar system.



4 The Vehicle Depot. Kit out your HERC with different weapons and defensive systems. Until you gain experience, it's strictly for window shoppers.

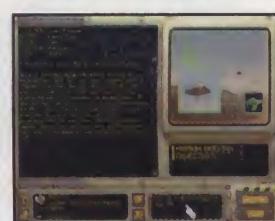
rear and, if you're not careful, getting behind a line of enemy units will see your metal backside toasted with a stream of plasma.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Start with the Human campaign and straight away you'll find yourself fighting alongside Rebel champ Harabec – you know, the stupid sonofabitch who triggered this whole damn rebellion thing in the first place. Actually, if you ignore Harabec's aggravating All



1 The main screen. Welcome to the *Starsiege* main area. This is where you get to see your stats, your vehicle and the details on all available squad members.

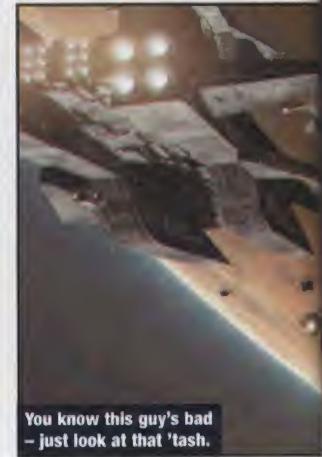


3 The Briefing. Move over to the Mission Briefing screen to see what your objectives are. Each target is explained and identified in plain English.



5 Under way. Time for action! Leave your base and follow your buddies to the combat arena. Here we're plodding after an enemy convoy.

American Hero™ mannerisms and bleached teeth, he's quite a nice chap. He'll chat to you during the missions, give you the odd spot of tactical guidance and pat you on the back – as much as you can pat someone on the back when they're entombed deep inside 75 tonnes of automated military hardware – when you don't screw up. Early missions will prove to be quite a challenge, as the functions of the various hardware bolt-ons available to



You know this guy's bad – just look at that 'tash.

you in the HERC fitting bay won't have had time to register. ECM? What does that do? How do I turn it on? What's the difference between the Cuttlefish Cloak and the Chameleon Cloak? Your best bet is to stick to a combination of team collaboration and stealth (commonly known as 'running away lots') as that's the only real way to win through.

The 45 missions themselves have been well thought out, represent a decent balance of action and strategy and immerse you straight away. Many are team oriented, and you'll have to get used to the various squad members chatting to one another, relaying information and requesting back-up. Very rarely are you left wondering what you're supposed to do, as your briefing continues in the form of commanding officers bellowing instructions into your ear hole: "Go over there! Shoot that! No, that! I'll deal with him!"

As with many similar games, primary and secondary objectives must be met before you can advance through the game, collect your pips and promotions and a wider range of weaponry. Sooner or later you'll also be able to lead your own squad into battle – plot a course on the map, issue orders and so on. Often if you're on a covert assignment, you'll be lurking out of sight and waiting for enemy patrols to pass without seeing you, so it's not just about blasting anything that stomps across your path. Mind you, if you want to blast everything, the supplied mission builder enables you to do just that.

OH WHAT AN ATMOSPHERE

The game is a country mile ahead of rivals in the ambience stakes. The textures, weather effects and landscapes are close to perfection. So, okay, none of us have actually been to Venus or Mars to check out the



HERCS AND VEHICLES

The vehicles all have different characteristics and it pays to know what's what

REBEL HERCS AND VEHICLES



Avenger

The Rebel Avenger is a large, lumbering tracked vehicle with tough armour to keep it shielded from cannon blasts. Working best at close range, the Avenger is ideal for knocking the legs from under enemy HERCs.



Dreadlock

The Dreadlock is a bulldozer vehicle with a toughened, sharpened blade of steel bolted to the front. Not only is this useful for driving into enemy HERCs, it provides phenomenal front protection from all kinds of blasts, missiles and explosions.



Emancipator

Highlighting the technical proficiency of the Martian Rebels, the Emancipator is actually a converted cargo loader. Screw down a few armour plates, weld on a few weapons and Bob's your uncle.



Olympian

Weighing in at more than 75 tonnes, the Olympian is a super-sized Rebel HERC built to support its smaller brothers and sisters in combat. Like the Emancipator it was built using the chassis of a cargo loader.



Predator

The Rebel Predator is built on a highly tuned hovercraft base and is highly manoeuvrable as a result. To help it move on planets where the atmosphere is thin, the Predator comes equipped with several anti-grav generators.



Thumper

The Thumper's prime weapon is a massive seismic charge which pulses out and knocks enemy HERCs off their feet. The vehicle lacks any form of shield and is thus extremely vulnerable to attack.



Apocalypse

A large, sturdy HERC weighing in at 85 tonnes, the Apocalypse is surprisingly agile. With a top speed of close to 100kph and ferro-composite armour shielding it from sustained attacks, it's the Empire's first pick for heavy attack HERC.



Basilisk

With a decent turn of speed and agility, the Basilisk is often found patrolling the Martian dunes or escorting cargo vehicles. Its armour is light, so a few blasts from a Rebel HERC is enough to drop it to its knees.



Conveyor

Built specifically for mass bombing runs and troop drops, it is formidable. They can be devastating in groups on ground-based forces; bombs take out defensive positions and troops then emerge to clean up.



Gorgon

Heavy and slow, the Gorgon is a plodding HERC with considerable armour. If you're unlucky enough to come up against a couple of these bastards lurking on the other side of a sand dune you know your pasty Rebel arse is in for a serious spanking.



Myrmidon

The Myrmidon is a medium-sized tank capable of serious damage when grouped with similar units. The downside is that, despite its relatively light mass, it's not particularly manoeuvrable.



Nike

An Imperial Heavy Tank chassis mounted with a Bombardier assault cannon, the Nike is a bit of a heavyweight mutha. Like the Rebel Thumper, the vehicle has no shield and so, despite its power, can be easily disabled by a group of nimble HERCs.



Paladin

Used to keep the skies free of Rebel scum, the Imperial Paladin is first and foremost an air defence tank. Although devastatingly effective against all air targets, the Paladin has no armour and is thus vulnerable to attack.

CYBRID HERCS AND VEHICLES



Adjudicator

The Cybrid Adjudicator was designed specifically to attack civilian targets and occasion a minor genocide. Armed with a radiation gun, two EMP cannons, a thermal lance and diffuser, running away is usually the best option.



Advocate

Slicing through the air like a missile, the Advocate can top 500kph – ten times the speed of the average HERC – and can deliver a consignment of six SLAM bombs or Archnitrons. Known to be particularly effective against Imperial Myrmidon units.



Consul

Another air skimmer capable of an impressive 300kph-plus, the Consul can be deadly as it comes packed with plasma cannons and laser-guided bombs. Its only real weakness is a soft underbelly – missile and gun turrets are able to drop them with ease.



Goad

Looking like it was designed by H R Giger, the Goad is one of the most feared Cybrid units – it is outrageously quick, particularly spry on its feet, and has an appearance frightening enough to make many an enemy sphincter twitter. Avoid. Like the plague.



INTRODUCING TRIBES

Fancy a sixty-foursome? Take a look at *Tribes*, the standalone multiplayer game bundled free with *Starsiege*

Back in the days of four-player network *Doom*, we were all more than happy to dash around tiny maps, shooting anything that moved and blowing our own faces off with the grenade launcher. You no doubt have fond memories of your first multiplayer sesh (everyone can remember the first time they 'did it'), where just seeing another marine – someone else, a real person! – was a major revelation. Even today, *Doom* still manages to cut the mustard, its core

Doom had zero support for teams. It was left to *Quake* to whet our appetites, *Unreal* to wow us with its bot games, and *Team Fortress* to show what the future held. With each new foray into the first-person shooter market offering better and better support for co-operative play, hardly anyone went back to straight deathmatch.

TURNING MULTIPLAYER

Set in the *Starsiege* universe, *Tribes* is a squad-based game that promises to steal some of

“Gameplay is fast, simple and standard fare. Those of you who have recently been plugging away at *Half-Life* will pick up *Tribes* in ten seconds flat”

gameplay elements essentially the same as those found in modern classics such as *Half-Life* and *Quake II*. Indeed, some would argue that its multiplayer weapons balance still puts it leagues ahead of more recent titles... but we'll leave that little hot potato for another time.

Unlike more recent first-person blockbusters, though,

the thunder from *Team Fortress Classic* and *Team Fortress II*. The story takes over from where the main *Starsiege* game leaves off, with the human race now fragmented and fighting in factions. Gone are the HERCs and the Cybrids, in their place are men in fashionable armoured suits (similar in appearance to the old *MechWarrior* clans). Everything



One of the weapons consoles, where you get yourself tooled up.

about it, from the way the arenas are laid out to the inclusion of multi-seater vehicles, has been geared around co-operation with your crewmates.

Outwardly, the game looks a little unvarnished next to the likes of *Unreal*. Nevertheless, the atmosphere is spot-on and the play silky smooth. The usual array of software gadgetry – coloured lighting, dazzling explosions and volumetric fogging – gets a look in, as does true 3D sound and a

passable backing track. The terrain is beautifully rendered, providing you with a heightened sense of scale, and the countless different textures and environments vary from shadowy night deserts to snow-covered mountain ranges. Weather effects add another heavy dollop of character, with the dark, rain-soaked valleys feeling particularly gloomy (probably because they remind us of Wales).

Your base, usually a huge

slab of granite looming starkly against the clouds, is home to your squad and to the technology that provides you with weaponry, armour, vehicles and all manner of exciting combat hardware. Despite its size, your HQ remains but another speck on the map when compared to the overall play area – it's possible to go trudging for miles in the wrong direction before a warning buzzer goes off to tell you that you're out of bounds.

THE TRIBES HUD

Know where you are in *Tribes*

1 Armour and Energy

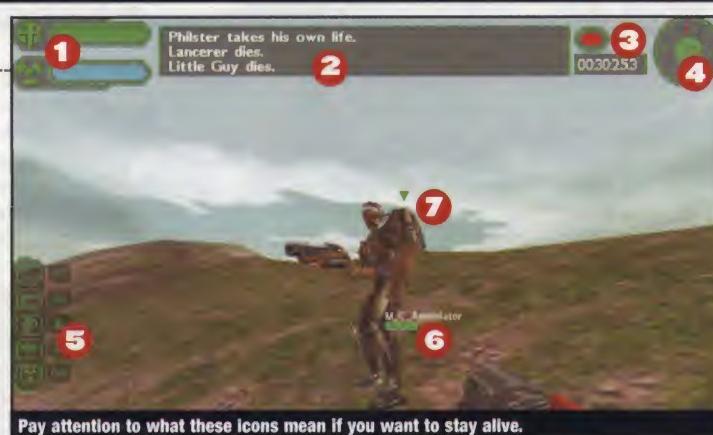
The green Armour bar is your overall health. When it runs out, you pop your clogs. The blue energy bar measures the power available to you. Power is needed for your armour jets as well as some of the weapons.

2 Chat Window

Provides an overview of messages, scores and server messages. Different colours refer to different message statuses. The area can be easily resized to your liking.

3 Timer and Sensor

This is a countdown to the end of the current game (if no limit has been set, it shows the time you've been playing). The indicator above it lights up when you're being scanned by enemy sensors.



Pay attention to what these icons mean if you want to stay alive.

4 Compass

The compass helps you navigate the vast *Tribes* arenas, as well as providing directional information to preset waypoints.

5 Weapons Bar

This section displays the status of your weapons and level of ammunition.

6 Target Details

Every time you aim at a target (hostile or friendly), the HUD displays the unit's info, including name and health status.

7 Sensor Network Icons

Each player on the field has a triangle above his/her head. Green represents a team mate, red shows an enemy.

BIG IN AMERICA

The Yanks have taken to *Tribes* big time. But at ZONE...

Starsiege has been a colossal hit in the US, with players now spending most of their free time connected to *Tribes* servers – we listed more than 400 of them last time we went online, which puts it ahead of *Half-Life* in the popularity stakes.

Despite this, we stick by our criticisms. Uninspired weaponry and sounds, poor squad organisation, no specific ranks or duties, no way of saving your results to a central database combine to dilute the team experience. What's more, you'll need 16 friends together in any game before it really comes alive (getting four of them round a dinner table is difficult enough). But, hey, who cares what the Yanks do anyway? Six million of them are on Prozac.

YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE

Getting going is remarkably simple. Everything focuses on instant action, which means no glitz or cinematics or farting around in options screens – you just get straight into typing your name, selecting a skin, and choosing whether you want to join or host a game.

The Internet screen, where all the various servers are displayed, is reminiscent of GameSpy and will be child's play for those of you used to going multiplayer. The standard *Tribes* game types should be familiar: Capture The Flag, Capture and Hold, Defend and Destroy, Find and Retrieve, Deathmatch and the obligatory Training. Every Internet game we played was low ping and lag free, with large maps and large squads proving the most entertaining.

The gameplay is fast, simple and standard fare – if you've been plugging away at *Half-Life* you'll pick up *Tribes* in seconds. The prime difference comes in the shape of armour jets – twin boosters on your feet that launch you into the air with a click of the right mouse button. Although flying through the air sounds rather gimmicky, it proves a real boon. Wait for your energy levels to build up, and then squirt yourself skyward. The only criticism is that many rooms and doorways inside your base remain inaccessible unless you fly.

The fighting can vary from

a frantic, non-stop tangle to thumb-twiddling boredom. For obvious reasons, large maps with few players fall into the latter category; small maps with more than 32 players are insane. Weapons are different and varied, but like *Unreal* don't provide the user with much in the way of gratification.

Strategy plays a strong part in *Tribes*, and teams are able to erect their own perimeter defences in the form of plasma turrets, much as you would in *Red Alert*. You can also opt for much heavier armour, giving you the ability to carry a more effective arsenal at the cost of speed and agility. Interestingly, you can't go around collecting every weapon and every power-up under the sun – each player is restricted to carrying a finite number of goodies, thus reducing the opportunity for team members to stock up before going in for the kill.

GOOD, BUT NOT THAT GOOD

Developing a 100 per cent squad-based game must have seemed like a good idea – right up to the point when someone decided to let 'real' people play it. Most Internet participants we came across were loners who clearly liked the idea of being part of a crew, but had their own rather single-minded agenda. There are also no player classes or individual responsibilities, meaning everyone ended up doing the same things for the

A NEW GENRE?**The future of games is multiplayer**

A somewhat ambitious and pioneering project for a commercial offering (it has no single-player options and requires that you have some form of TCP or IPX-based connectivity), *Tribes* has been bundled with *Starsiege* in order to lend the new 'multiplayer only' subgenre some weight. With the likes of *Quake III* and *Team Fortress II* looming ever closer, we should find that future titles won't need to be chaperoned in the same way. Put free Internet access, cheaper performance hardware and capped telephone calls into the picture, and you can see why multiplayer games are the only way forward.

same objective. This left many of the superb team-specific features ignored, and turned games into an average online deathmatch. And for that there are better alternatives.

If you are a member of a clan or know a large number of people with whom you can band together, *Tribes* will offer you an experience like no other. Otherwise, keep an eye out for the new *Team Fortress*.



Ain't no Imperial scabs gettin' in THIS darn bunker...

← colour of the soil, but *Starsiege* makes it look, well, the way you think it should look. Derelict spacecraft slowly rotting at the base of dunes; unfamiliar moons filling the night sky; oddly shaped footprints in the sand – all look just the ticket and serve to remind you that you're stuck on the wrong side of the solar system.

Then there's the 20,000-metre draw distance. And, wow, does this make a difference. Most games you play these days are 'fogged' towards the horizon, making it easier going for the processor as there are fewer objects in your field of vision. *Starsiege* has no such fog or preset limitations, permitting monumental views across the drifting silt of the Martian landscape and a sense of scale. This means you can see distant enemy units climbing a giant dune, or the glint of an abandoned building on the horizon. With the soporific plod, plod, plod of your HERC, you'll be pretty near mesmerised.

The main game graphics – in other words, the battle units, vehicles and support craft – are all well designed, well rendered and are brought to life with coloured lighting effects and real-time shadows. Each unit has a unique cockpit and a unique perspective on the exterior world and a different orchestra of mechanical noise to accompany you on your long trudges. The only real complaint with the way things look is that, despite the dazzling screenshots and efflorescent bomb blasts, almost all your time is spent peering through a windshield. Most enemy HERCs look like stick insects until you're right up close (like, 20 metres away close) and, what with the computer putting a big green ring and red square around every targeted unit, the *Starsiege* world can often look a bit messy.

IN THE HEAT OF IT ALL

We reckon that many players new to action/strategy gaming will be cursing the way their HERC works. Whereas the basic skills for games like *Half-Life* and *MechWarrior* are learned in a matter of minutes (and often flatter your true abilities), *Starsiege* requires hours of practice. Combine this relative inaccessibility with restricted peripheral vision,

no rear-view mirror and the agility of a diesel locomotive, and you soon find yourself banging the keyboard in frustration when outflanked by a troop of Imperial soldiers for what seems like the billionth time. Reload, try again.

To be truthful, that's the game's only real fault. In fact it may be a virtue, as it lends it a certain longevity. If you think you can see your way through the early missions, you'll love it to bits – as we did. But if you're someone who likes to get straight into a game and start blasting without even opening the manual, you won't. ☐

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Tremendous atmosphere • *Starsiege* features 35 different HERCs, flyers and tanks and an admirable single-player game • Both games have comprehensive multiplayer support and a long life span • Drag and drop HUD displays • Customisable paint jobs • Excellent value

DOWNSERS *Starsiege* a bit slow for hard-core action fans • HERCs can feel clumsy • Multiplayer arenas too large • Some technical glitches • Success of team-based games heavily reliant on other players • HERC controls take some getting used to • Hopeless *Tribes* manual

88 Entertaining and absorbing, but not without its faults



It's hard to get four people round for dinner, never mind 32 over the Internet.

Every weapon has a zoom function, which means sniping is rifle.



As with *Starsiege*, the draw distance is nothing short of gobsmacking.

Heavy armour restricts your movement but is great for defence.

Vehicles are a great way of getting around the vast arenas quickly.

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

★ £39.99 • Fox Interactive • Out May

Everyone in the PC ZONE office could hear Richie Shoemaker scream

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** Direct3D-compatible 3D card **WE SAY** P266, 32Mb RAM and a 3D card should keep most people screaming. Can get jerky with too much on screen, though

ALSO CONSIDER

HALF-LIFE (Cendant, £34.99) Still the best first-person shoot 'em up on the planet. But does it have yer official, turn inducing Aliens? Nope, it don't.

(PCZ #71, 95%)

ALIEN TRILOGY (Acclaim, £14.99) Conversely, one of the worst first-person shoot 'em ups on the planet, even though it *does* have the official, turd-inducing Aliens. Strange, that.

(PCZ #46, 79%)

PCZONE CLASSIC

Quite clearly, I'm mad. Bonkers, in fact. If I'm not going around the proverbial twist, then why is it that I think *Aliens Vs Predator* is so damn fine, while everyone else in the office is shrugging their shoulders with indifference and still spouting about *Half-Life*?

to poach for themselves. Nearly every 3D shooter of the last five years has nicked at least one idea from *Aliens* – if it wasn't those spindly insectoids with phallus-shaped heads, it was usually the facehuggers. The reason for this plagiarism is that whether you admit it in public or not, *Aliens* are scary. They are scary because we all know what they can do. If they don't rip your face off first, they'll play a kind of tonsil-hockey with you that's so unpleasant, you'd rather snog Thora Hurd.

Either way, you die. *AvP* may not be the best-ever 3D shooter but, thanks to its cast, it's certainly the scariest. Well, a third of it is.

FEAR FACTORY

Indulge me for a second while I explain to you what happened when I first played the *Marine* demo in the office back in

to scream like a baby when a facehugger first leaps at your head and deep-throats you.

As a Predator, you are spared any real pant-browning moments because, against Marines, you have little to fear. Against Aliens you feel a little more confident, with a spear gun that pins enemies to walls, and vision modes that enable weapons to automatically lock on whenever anything comes into view. It doesn't quite have the offensive capabilities of the Marine but, in a dark corner, immobile and invisible, the Predator is the perfect camper.

Choosing the Alien is a different experience. You collect health, not by picking up medkits, but by burying your inner jaws into human skulls. And you can only do that by sneaking up

My, what a shiny head.



"Did you see that head come apart?"



The flamer: not too hot.



Fancy a quickie?

• The Alien Queen is wonderfully animated.

Sure, *Half-Life* (PCZ #71, 95%) is the best 3D shooter ever made. But does it have Aliens? No. Does it have Marines? With smart guns? No. Instantly identifiable, the three subjects of *AvP* – Marine, Predator, Alien – are those that every game since *Doom* has wanted

December. The lights were on and everyone around was running around trying to get the January issue finished. I was in a different world – sneaking down a flickering corridor, chucking flares ahead, listening for movement. This didn't stop me screeching like a girl minutes later, though.

Work stopped immediately and concerned faces appeared, thinking I'd put my fingers in an electrical socket. I hadn't, of course. The reason my hair stood on end and a white crust formed around my lips was that an Alien had dropped from an overhead ventilation shaft and torn my face off. I had to take a break. Ten minutes later, I was back for more.

No other game has pushed my adrenalin level so high. Playing as a Marine for six hours with the lights off would probably kill you. I dare anyone not

on Marines or finding civilian colonists, which means taking out guards first or chasing colonists into a corner. Movement takes some getting used to, but the ability to scout swiftly over every surface adds another set of skills. You have to keep moving to avoid being split apart like an over-ripe peach, use shadows and air ducts to get in close and personal, then make your kill and move on.

With such diverse characters

That'll be me dead, then.

While you won't find any *Unreal*-style over-the-top effects, what you do get is just as thrilling. The way the Aliens scoot up the walls, close in for the kill and come apart in an explosion of limbs and acid is spectacular. Take their legs away with a few slugs to the midriff and they pull themselves

• **I dare anyone not to scream like a baby when a facehugger first leaps at your head and deep-throats you**

to choose from, *AvP* is a bit different to *Half-Life* and the rest. The Marine's motion tracker works up the fear factor by registering not only enemy movement, but also breaking glass and flying limbs. Blow an Alien to bits and they'll register until they melt through the floor. Graphically, *AvP* is unique,

relentlessly across the floor. Flickering lights even cause you to see things that aren't there. Then, when you're convinced you're not going mad, an Alien drops from the ceiling or a Predator phases into view.

The missions unfold more like a beat 'em up: complete the six missions for each character in



'training mode' and you open up two more. Finish them all in 'realistic mode' and you unlock a couple more. Do the lot in the 'Director's Cut' and you have access to over ten missions per character, each of which is replayable because the enemy doesn't necessarily start in the same place every time.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

There's no story to speak of, regardless of which character you choose. It's basically you versus the world. When it comes to playing as a Marine, *AvP* would have benefited from a few intelligent comrades running around.



Talk about well hung.

You see some in the later missions, but they're killed almost immediately.

Playing as an Alien, you feel completely alone and, considering the fact that you have to overcome an often confusing control method and have no ranged weaponry, the game would have been far more enjoyable if you were acting as part of a collective.

On the sound front, a few wisecracks from the Marines would have helped. And

remembering how, in the films, the Predator could emulate the human voice to cause a diversion, there's still more that could have been tapped from the licence.

But what makes *AvP* so enjoyable is

that for the first time since *Aliens* on the Spectrum, someone has finally made a decent *Aliens* game. If there was an award for the scariest game ever, *AvP* would win it hands-down. It's tense, challenging, frightening and, above all, different. I defy anyone not to enjoy its simplicity and revel in its moments of terror. It's a scream. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS

- Scary • Three distinct and unique modes of play for both single- and multiplayer games • Enemies don't always start in the same place
- It's Aliens, for Chrissakes

DOWNERS

- No storyline to speak of
- Alien levels take some getting used to
- No savegame • May induce nightmares or epilepsy – or both

91 The scariest game you will ever play



Be like Newt – hide under the grating.

...until you actually open fire.

The Predator's shoulder cannon locks on.

Hello, boys.

An end-of-level drop ship lands to take you away.

ALIENS VS PREDATOR VS MARINES

Play as part of a team for the best experience

As a pure deathmatch game, *Aliens Versus Predator* is not the best around. If you want a game of 'every man for himself', then you're better served with either *Quake II* (PCZ #59, 97%) or *Half-Life* (PCZ #71, 95%). *AvP* works best played as a team game. We played it in the office as a squad of Marines against hordes of AI-controlled Aliens. After the initial confusion blew over, it was a blast.

You can set the Aliens' AI and apply different frag points to each character, having each one equal or making the Predator the ultimate scalp to take.

Players in the PC ZONE office were concerned about the difficulties inherent in playing as an Alien, but this is offset by the fact that they are hard to kill. Mallo complained that they moved too fast, and Charlie, seemingly unable to grasp the concept of taking out lights, wasn't too happy about being left in the dark.

It's too early to tell whether *AvP* will catch on as a multiplayer game. It takes a lot of getting used to and, if you're still learning the ropes in *Quake II*, you're going to have to train very hard to get anywhere. But the potential is there, and multiplayers hankering for the *Aliens* experience will not be disappointed with what's on offer. As with the single-player game, *AvP* is a very different experience from what we're currently used to. I'd be surprised if *AvP* took over the world, but glad if it did.

TOCA 2

£39.99 • Codemasters • Out now

It looks like the old model, but it drives like nothing else. Phil Wand is really rather impressed with Codemasters' latest touring car challenge

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** TCP/IP, IPX, modem and direct cable multiplayer **WE SAY** PII 266, 64Mb RAM and an accelerated 3D card recommended

ALSO CONSIDER

COLIN McRAE RALLY

(Codemasters, £39.99) Another masterpiece from Codemasters, and it's currently the benchmark for PC rally games.

PCZ #68, 93%

NEED FOR SPEED III (Electronic Arts, £39.99) Puts the fun back into driving games. Hugely accessible, and features an exotic line-up of cars that you can drive.

PCZ #69, 91%

VIPER RACING

(Sierra, £39.99) Like TOCA 2 it features a class-leading ride, but with only one car in the line-up the game has little long-term appeal.

PCZ #73, 80%

Ever noticed how delicately balanced our economy is? The moment car prices go down, petrol prices go up. Even the humble Ford Fiesta now gulps more than 20 quid's worth of fuel at the local filling station. Add road tax, insurance premiums and servicing bills, and running a car these days costs almost as much as it does to park it in Central London. Even then, that's not taking into account the stress of dealing with reps in Ford Mondeos and Vauxhall Vectras who think they own the road (pity they don't own the car as well, as they might be less inclined to involve you in their accidents).

PCZONE CLASSIC

Thing is, it's not all that bad. Those of us who used to enjoy tearing around the countryside just for the hell of it can now immerse ourselves in increasingly realistic simulations, with no petrol bills, no road fund licences and no MOT tests to strain our wallets. The only thing you're not spared in TOCA 2 is Mondeo and Vectra drivers who think they're on a race track – because in this game they are on a race track.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Codemasters have retained their official Touring Car licence for this latest instalment, which means the game boasts every driver, car and team from the 1998 Championship, along with the new rules and regulations (sprint races, feature races, pit stops and so on). It also hints that everything's going to be pretty

Oh my god, a gigantic windscreen wiper is blocking the track!

much 'business as usual' – so no invincibility power-ups or bananas thrown under the wheels of the guy behind you. And certainly no super-grippy tyres, rainbow-coloured speed boosts or miniaturising ray guns. If you're looking for the silly stuff, try *Micro Machines* or go buy a Nintendo. TOCA 2 is a serious driving sim first and foremost; a progression of a well-established genre rather than a deluge of new ideas.

Visually, TOCA 2 has been rummaging around Codemasters'

• If you can't get used to the game as a simulation, you can damp down the realism and turn it into more of an arcade racer

parts bin for its graphics engine. Like its distinguished predecessor, *TOCA: Touring Car Championship* (PCZ #59, 86%), and *Colin McRae Rally* (PCZ #68, 93%), the race cars are well-modelled, easily distinguishable from one another, and dent convincingly when speared at high speed by a Volvo. The only downside is that they're a bit jagged and a little too similar to

the ones in the first game – that is, until you take a closer look. Much more of the vehicle can now be damaged and deformed, meaning it's quite common to be flying round circuits with the rear bumper dragging along the tarmac, a front wing jiggling in the breeze, and the bonnet flapped up against your windshield like the lid of a gigantic toilet.

In this latest game, you can also see through the glass of each car and straight into the interior: dashboard, seats, driver – even

chewing gum wrappers in the ashtray and bogies wiped under the steering column (er, if you look hard enough). This may at first sound like one of those useless gimmicks that serves only to supplement the horseshit on the back of the box, but it's actually a major boost to the overall atmosphere of the game. Look down a long line of traffic during

THE CARS



Honda Accord

Drivers: James Thompson, Peter Kox
Engine: 4-cylinder, 1998cc, 16V
Output: Not quoted
Drive: FF



Ford Mondeo

Drivers: Will Hoy, Craig Baird, Nigel 'Interesting' Mansell
Engine: V6, 2000cc, 24V
Output: 295bhp @ 8500rpm
Drive: FF



Peugeot 406

Drivers: Tim Harvey, Paul Radisich
Engine: 4-cylinder, 1998cc, 20V
Output: 300bhp @ 8300rpm
Drive: FF



Renault Laguna

Drivers: Alain Menu, Jason Plato
Engine: 4-cylinder, 1998cc, 16V
Output: 296bhp @ 8250rpm
Drive: FF



Me. Champ. Natch.



The support Fiestas lean a bit more than the 'real' Touring Cars.

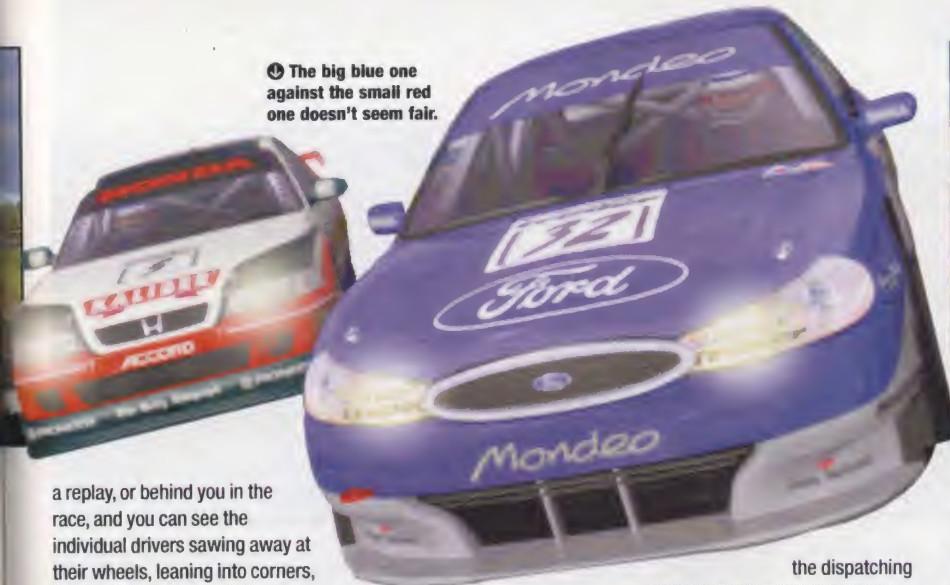


"Come in number six, your time is up."



"Incccccccumlling!"

The big blue one against the small red one doesn't seem fair.



a replay, or behind you in the race, and you can see the individual drivers sawing away at their wheels, leaning into corners, jerking their necks, and shaking their fists when you fish-tail them into a concrete barrier. You'll be hitting the rewind button and replaying your dangerous driving techniques more often than you might think.

THE WAY YOU DRIVE TONIGHT

Perhaps the biggest and most obvious improvement is the way *TOCA 2* drives. Critics of the old game snivelled about knife-edge handling, iffy steering and a slightly anaesthetised feel to the whole thing; keyboard players and joystick waggles found it inconceivably difficult, and sloped off to play the easier *Formula One Grand Prix* instead.

In response, Codemasters have designed not only a thoroughly improved ride, but also a variable physics set-up as well – you can even drive it from the keyboard and not understeer into the kitty litter at every chicane. This means

that if you can't get used to the game as a simulation, you can damp down the realism and turn it into more of an arcade racer. For sheer enjoyment, we found that the middle ground between the two is unbeatable.

That's not to say the car has suddenly become a lead weight on rails, just that it's more composed than before. Driving is now the pleasure it should be and not the struggle it once was. During the race, you're no longer worried about lighting up the tyres, cornering flat out or jumping on the brakes at the last possible moment. Even though the tracks are more bumpy and undulating than before, the car holds its position well and doesn't bite back when on the limit. And being side-swiped or nudged from behind no longer sees you swapping ends and facing your antagonist bonnet to bonnet. Flick-of-the-wheel overtaking and

the dispatching of back markers are now done with ease, although a lot of this is down to the new, improved intelligence routines (slower cars get off the racing line and out of the way when you come barrelling up behind them).

The support championships, with vehicles ranging from the ubiquitous Ford Fiesta and Formula Ford to the Lister Storm and TVR Speed 12, inject variety and should make the game appeal to all driving and motorsport fans. What's more, every car has a unique cockpit view, engine sound and handling characteristics: a V6 Mondeo rasps and booms, whereas a four-cylinder Van Diemen single-seater sounds like a Moulinex food blender.

A WHOLE LOT MORE ACCESSIBLE

Many races follow the same pattern: single-lap qualify, jostle for the first corner, then keep it out of the underbrush until you cross



"Excuse me, but I think you'll find it's my racing line..."

the finish line. So *TOCA 2*'s various support races, challenge tracks and multiplayer options – including a superb four-player N64-style split screen – are a sight for bored eyes. Unlike before, you're now able to race on any circuit (as well as on a private test track where you can experiment with different car set-ups and do handbrake turns to your heart's content). The previous system that required tracks to be 'unlocked' before you progress has long gone. While some options remain hidden from you until you show that you have sufficient mettle, the game feels a whole lot more accessible, and provides plenty of entertainment straight out of the box.

Your view of the race has also been improved, and features an additional interior perspective. 3D card owners benefit from treacly smooth animation inside the cockpit, with a pair of gloved hands turning the wheel, changing gear and flicking V-signs at other drivers with startling realism. In fact this first-person perspective is a workable alternative – so

good, in fact, that if you have a large enough monitor we think you'll prefer it to the traditional 'tip of the bonnet' camera. Seriously.

In summary, then, *TOCA 2* is not the hardened simulation it once was, and instead it provides a pliant ride for everyone and anyone. It's now a thoroughly polished game, with enough playability and sufficient depth to make it one of the more durable classics around.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS The most playable racing sim ever • Great sounds, smooth graphics • Bumper-to-bumper action • Flatters your driving skills • Customisable set-ups and appearance • Support races as good as the main event

DOWNERS Too many jagged lines • Might not present enough of a challenge to old hands

93 Put magazine down.
Go to shop.
Buy game



Vauxhall Vectra

Drivers: John Cleland, Derek Warwick
Engine: 4-cylinder, 2000cc, 16V
Output: 295bhp @ 8400rpm
Drive: FF



Volvo S40

Drivers: Rickard Rydell, Gianni Morbidelli
Engine: 5-cylinder, 1999cc, 20V
Output: 290bhp @ 8500rpm
Drive: FF



Audi A4

Drivers: Yvan Muller, John Blintcliffe
Engine: 4-cylinder, 1998cc, 16V
Output: 296bhp @ 8250rpm
Drive: FF

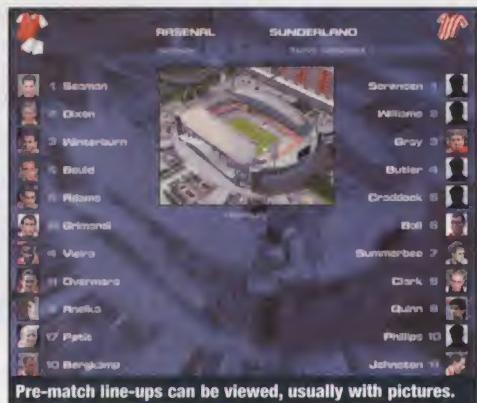


Nissan Primera

Drivers: David Leslie, Anthony Reid
Engine: 4-cylinder, 1998cc, 16V
Output: 297bhp @ 8300rpm
Drive: FF



Four players on one screen is a bit... er, slow.



Pre-match line-ups can be viewed, usually with pictures.



Varying standards of personnel can be employed.



Major Cup draws can be viewed in an elaborate fashion.



Four of these ten predefined formations can be brought into play on the fly.



You can zoom out of the action to get a better idea of formations.

PREMIER MANAGER NINETY NINE

★ £39.99 • Gremlin Interactive • Out now

Does it deserve a first-team place, or should it be consigned to the bench of mediocrity? Gesticulating wildly: Steve Hill

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3D acceleration through Direct 3D **WE SAY** At least a P200 with 32Mb RAM for graphics mode

If you're wondering why you've already seen this in the shops, it's because the release date was brought forward in the wake of

Kevin Keegan accepting the part-time role of England manager. It's clearly a cynical attempt to cash in on the surrounding media interest, but what it does mean is

that the game went on sale before *Championship Manager 3* (PCZ #73, 93%).

It could be argued that this is the only advantage that *PM 99* has over its arch rival, and that the interim period might have been better spent actually playtesting the game rather than rushing it onto the shelves. For all

the glossy packaging and mock cyber-picture of Keegan that adorns the CD case, what lies within is a game put together on an industrial estate in Madrid. Three years ago.

For those who aren't familiar with recent incarnations of the *Premier Manager* series, it takes more of a *Theme Park* approach to football management, as opposed to the number-crunching of *Championship Manager*. To this end, *Premier Manager Ninety Nine* incorporates almost every aspect of running a football club, the on-pitch action supplemented by all manner of financial tomfoolery, including ground expansion,



Sideways hairstyles are all the rage.

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

not to order some more scarves for the club shop, or to charge a pound for a pie. Every normal, right-thinking person will simply concentrate on the football though, because, as any pundit will confirm, it's what happens on the pitch that counts.

FOUR PLAY

Football is all about results, and there are four ways of getting the information. For the man in a hurry, the 'results' mode simply generates a rapid result, pausing only at half time to enable formation changes and substitutions. It's a fairly rudimentary option though, and even the game's manual advises



Some dramatic goals can be scored, although they are occasionally a bit similar.

ALSO CONSIDER

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

(Eidos, £39.99) For its legions of fans, it's more a way of life than a game. One for the purists.

PCZ #73, 93%

FA PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL

MANAGER 99 (EA Sports, £39.99)

A reasonable effort that tries hard but just fails to convince.

PCZ #70, 72%

PLAYER MANAGER SEASON 98-99

(Anco, £29.99) A potentially all right game, hampered by the fact that it crashes on a regular basis. Avoid.

PCZ #72, 66%

FOOTBALL WORLD MANAGER (Ubi Soft, £34.99)

Surprisingly successful for what is a largely turgid experience. PCZ #72, 60%



"Hands up... Baby, hands up..."



The transfer system in all its glory.

against using it. The 'brief' mode displays a plan view of the pitch, with the players represented by coloured counters, Sky Sports-style. There's a *Champ Manager*-style possession bar, and significant events are relayed via text. The 'highlights' mode is the same deal, except that it goes into the graphics mode every time a goal is scored. Finally, there's the 'view' mode, with the action played out 'as live' via an all-new 3D engine.

The games can last either four, eight, 12 or 20 minutes, and while you'd have to be sick in the mind to attempt the latter (our solitary experiment ended in a 4-4 draw), the four-minute option is actually quite watchable. Substitutions can be made, and

up to four predetermined formations can be brought into play on the fly.

There's a school of thought that suggests that no one will use the viewing option, and if you're not going to you might as well just stick to *CM3*. This is the only area in which *PM 99* excels over its rival, and actually being able to see your tactics put into practice is clearly a good thing.

“In Premiership matches, Davies name-checks every player, whereas in the Third Division only those whose name begins with ‘A’ get a mention”

The action can be viewed from an array of camera angles, and the Gremlin archives have once again been trawled for the obligatory Barry Davies commentary.

It's interesting to note that in Premiership matches, Davies name-checks every player, whereas in the Third Division only those whose name begins with 'A' get a mention. This is indicative of the sloppiness that riddles *PM 99*, including a number of annoying bugs. For instance, it's quite possible for a player to score a goal despite

the fact that he's been substituted. It's this kind of inconsistency that will inevitably have purists reaching for *CM3*. And yes, we are reviewing a boxed copy of *PM 99* here.

SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Although it's essentially the same game, *Premier Manager Ninety Nine* is admittedly an improvement on previous

bypass the tedious clicking and swapping of players. But with a degree of patience, and overlooking occasional glaring flaws – such as bizarre kits, racial inaccuracies and empty stadiums – there is still some value to be had.

Premier Manager Ninety Nine may not suck you in to the same extent as *CM3*, but it's still an extremely playable game. Loath as we are to recommend bugged software, *PM 99* can be a lot of fun in a more casual kind of way.

Obviously the purists will sneer and return to their glorified spreadsheet, but even the most loyal *CM3* fan could do worse than to consider *Premier Manager Ninety Nine* as a viable second choice. **PCZ**

versions. The tactics options are comprehensive, and individual players can now be designated to take free kicks, corners and penalties. The transfer system has been marginally tweaked, but it's still far from perfect, with no option to renege on deals.

The interface is as ugly and awkward as ever, and negotiating it can be a chore – a world away from *CM3*'s hyper-linked smoothness. The PlayStation version has an auto-select feature – something that would have been useful here, if only to

WALKTHROUGH

SPOT ON

Was he tripped, was he pushed, or did he take a dive? The players look at each other and...



1 "The ref's pointed to the spot..."



2 "...The charismatic Alan Shearer steps up..."



3 "...He strikes it low and hard and... It's there!"



4 "I wouldn't say it's a great deal."

DATABASE, HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

As usual, the game comes with a comprehensive database of players, comprising brief histories of their careers along with some other moribund information. Whereas this is clearly a godsend to bone-idle football journalists, it's not actually accessible from within the game, and therefore it's a complete waste of time and effort. Quite simply, you're never gonna use it.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Good-looking new graphics engine • Flexible level of involvement

DOWNERS Riddled with bugs • Irritating design

81 Nice graphics, shame about the interface



“Darn,” said Hank.
“Now I’ve gone and
dropped me 99.”

BUCKET AND SLAYED

Number 78 in an occasional series of short novellas based on in-game screenshots

Hank Stone was pissed. Scratch that. Hank Stone was way pissed. Southend, England. What kind of stinkin’ assignment was *this*? He was a black ops legend, the Pentagon’s secret weapon, a one-man army who’d kicked ass in every one of the world’s major hotspots, and here he was working undercover, investigating an ice-cream van scam in some no-mark Limey ‘resort’. Someone back at HQ was yanking his chain, big time.

He clenched his jaw and ground on the cigar butt a moment longer. He’d been staring into space when he was supposed to be scanning the horizon. The amphibious tank rolled onto the shore, crushing screaming sunbathers beneath it. Hank popped a fresh clip into his nuke-o-matic F57 special and bounded for the beach. And as he opened fire on everyone and everything within sight, a familiar feeling glowed in his loins. He smiled. What a glorious day this was turning out to be.

Man, he loved his job...



You can play with a friend. With one hand on the keyboard, and the other in a bag of Smarties/Wotsits/Bombay Mix (delete as appropriate).

Saving Private Ryan, live from the Glastonbury Festival.



EXPENDABLE

£34.99 • Rage Software • Out end of April

Take or leave us, only please believe us, we ain’t never gonna be *Expendable*.
Crossing the Thin Red Line: Charlie Brooker

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major 3D and sound cards **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D accelerator card **WE SAY** You’ll need a PII and 64Mb RAM to get the best results

War is in. War is as ‘now’ as it gets, dahling. We’ve sat through *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Thin Red Line*. We’ve replaced jeans with combat trousers. We’ve seen Kate Moss on the telly declaring war on split ends.

Where will it all end? Will the catwalks of Paris become a parade of machine-gun-toting squaddies, dragging the blood-drenched corpses of their buddies behind them? No, of course not.

Still, if you’re searching for the point where beauty and man’s inhumanity to man intersect, look no further than your PC. Over the past few months, PC owners have been playing some of the prettiest examples of violence the world has ever seen: *Half-Life*. *Wargasm*. And now *Expendable*.

A HISTORY OF SHOOTING

Expendable is a shoot ‘em up in the *old* sense. Once upon a time, teenage boys used to huddle together in arcades, pumping coins into machines like *R-Type* and *Scramble*. These were known as ‘side-scrolling shooters’ because the landscape scrolled from right to left and you got to shoot loads of things. Usually, you controlled a small, vaguely phallic spacecraft, which you ‘powered

up’ until it was spouting more laser beams than a Jean-Michel Jarre concert. Then someone had the bright idea of changing the spaceship into a soldier, rotating the whole shebang through 90 degrees and calling it *Commando*. Bingo: the ‘top-down, horizontal-scrolling shoot ‘em up’ was born.

The top-down shooter genre has been neglected for years – until now. Because, yes, that’s exactly what *Expendable* is. Of course, since we’re living in space year 1999, the landscape doesn’t just scroll from top to bottom; it rotates, mutates, zooms in and out and does more or less anything you can imagine a landscape doing except putting on a comedy wig and doing a little dance.

Unlike *Commando* or that other paragon of top-down shooting fun, *Ikari Warriors*, *Expendable* is set in the future. It’s the year 2463, and instead of controlling a cigar-chompin’ *Rambo* type, you’re in command of a genetically engineered, utterly ‘expendable’ trooper. Bit of a shame if you ask us – a realistic setting would’ve been far more exciting.

Still, the game does everything else in time-honoured fashion. There are thousands of enemies hurling themselves into your line of fire like an army of lemmings, plenty of weapon power-ups and

“It’s packed with spectacular explosions – not just weedy puffs of flame, but retina-sizzling pyrotechnics”



“Hi, I’m Ed-209. You might remember me from such films as *RoboCop*.”

ALSO CONSIDER

HALF-LIFE (Sierra, £34.99) The best action game around at the moment. Bar none. **PCZ #71, 95%**

WARZONE 2100 (Eidos Interactive, £39.99) The best 3D action/strategy game you can buy right now. **PCZ #75, 90%**

COMMANDO ARCADE CABINET

You could probably get one of these from Chris Jackson (see Obsessed last issue). Tel 01977 662276.

NOT REVIEWED

grenades to collect, and a hulking great guardian to defeat at the end of each level. Best of all, it’s got a simultaneous two-player mode so you and a friend can take on the world together, just like Butch and Sundance and that. Ahhh.

LIGHT FUSE AND RETIRE

When you’re using a decent 3D card, *Expendable* has truly fantastic graphics. Rage Software can go to the head of the class. It’s also packed with spectacular explosions – not just weedy puffs of flame, but the kind of retina-sizzling pyrotechnics that appear in Hollywood sci-fi epics. And they

Ah. Ah. Ah. Ah. Staying alive.
Staying alive.





"Looks like a f***ing fireworks display..."



One of them pesky end-of-level bosses.



Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang.



The levels are all a bit samey, really. Still, so is life, I suppose.



Did we mention the explosions?

appear every time you do anything, even if you fire at a pile of wooden crates in a fit of pique. Sometimes the screen's so full of smoke and flares and throbbing, wavering pulses of light that you feel like a wide-eyed teenager peaking dangerously at an early '90s rave. It's like watching a futuristic war described by a habitual exaggerator. And it's here that the problem lies.

Would the movie *Seven* have been improved if Kevin Spacey had delivered Gwyneth Paltrow's head in a box to Brad Pitt right at the start, then spent the rest of the film delivering the heads of Pitt's family, friends and casual acquaintances? No. It might have made an interesting black comedy, but it wouldn't have been very exciting. Similarly, *Star Wars* would be dull if every scene consisted of the Death Star exploding, *Boogie Nights* would've been *Boring Nights* if Dirk Diggler had whipped it out straight away, and if Clark Gable spent all of *Gone With The Wind* telling Scarlett that he didn't give a damn, neither would the audience.

It's all about escalation, and climax, and saving the best till last. And it's something the makers of *Expendable* haven't quite grasped. This is a case of a game being *too* spectacular, too soon. You spend the first level going "Woooo!" and "Ahhhhh!" and blowing the shinola out of everything, but by the time you've got to level five you're no longer dazzled, and the remaining 12 levels seem like a slog. In fact, the

sheer scale of spectacle tends to distance you from the proceedings, whereas it should start small and build itself up. Which is a real pity, because this is a very capable little blaster.

HIT START BUTTON

All in all, *Expendable* lives up to its name – it's a bit of mental chewing gum. That isn't to say it isn't a good game, because it is. If you yearn for a bit of pick-up-and-play arcade simplicity, a shot of instant satisfaction, look no further. It's also ideal for showing off your flash new PC to the next-door neighbour. But despite the inclusion of a few rudimentary puzzles, it's a no-brainer that shoots its bolt a mite early.

Expendable is also being released on the PlayStation and the Dreamcast, which are perhaps its spiritual home. Rage should also look into doing an arcade version, possibly via Sega's Naomi initiative. As a mindless coin-guzzler, it's perfect – in the corner of a chip shop it would rock. Just don't expect much more. **PCZ**



PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Instantly accessible arcade fun • Two players on a single PC

- Dazzling visuals

DOWNERS Repetitive

- Too spectacular too soon

79 A quick high, but a rapid comedown

NASCAR REVOLUTION

★ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

Drive at speed around an oval and clobber other cars at will. Dizzy and damaged:

Matthew Burgess

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Direct X/Glide-compliant 3D card **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards and 3D accelerator cards

WE SAY As always, a heftier processor and an extra 32Mb RAM will speed things up considerably

ALSO CONSIDER

TOCA 2 (Codemasters, £39.99)

The king of non-F1 racing sims. A top-notch game with loads of options to twiddle around with.

REVIEWED ON PAGE 84

CARMAGEDDON II (Sci, £39.99)

If you really want to go hell for leather with a load of other nutters, you might as well take out a few pedestrians along the way.

PCZ #69, 95%

Electronic Arts further extend their monopoly of virtually every sport known to man by muscling in on the NASCAR (North American Stock Car Racing) franchise, previously the domain of Papyrus. In case you didn't know, NASCAR is several country miles away from the refined world of Formula One: we're talking hot metal, burning rubber, and burly men going bumper to bumper in a triumph of brute force over finesse. It ain't the most sophisticated of sports but, hey, nor is football (when Arsenal are playing, that is), and that's pretty popular.

ACCELERATE, BRAKE, TURN LEFT

What sets *NASCAR* apart from other motor sports is that most

of the circuits are oval – just like those basic Scalextric sets you used to get at Christmas when your parents couldn't afford the Le Mans edition. This means that the racing experience is largely confined to three actions: accelerate, brake and turn left (all races run anti-clockwise). This would indeed make for a game duller than a Celine Dion B-side were it not for the other cars you're up against – and there are loads of them. Forty-two 700bhp monsters, to be precise, all screaming around with a Schumacher-esque 'get outta my road' mentality. *NASCAR* is not for the faint-hearted, especially as most of the tracks are surrounded by soft gravel traps and concrete walls. Nor is it for those whose attention wanders easily, as full-length competitions can often run to 300 laps – enough to test the resilience of even the most dedicated racing fan.

SPEED SENSATION

The graphics are everything we've come to expect from a PC racer nowadays: slick 3D-accelerated raceways, and beautifully detailed cars that move like the bloody fast things that they are. The sensation of speed (when using the bumper cam) is excellent, and navigating your way through a sea of jostling

machines at 180mph induces a definite 'lean left and right to get more purchase' sensation (usually transformed into one of 'throwing the joystick at the monitor' when one of the buggers nudges you into the track wall).

Your car has a pretty good throaty roar, but the rest of the sounds are almost non-existent bar a few crowd cheers. There are no tyres squealing in protest as you enter a corner too fast (which is rather annoying, as the only way you know this is happening is when the steering doesn't respond and you end up piling into the side wall) and, most strange, the other cars seem to make no noise at all.

BENNY AND BOB

Every race is garnished with liberal dollops of commentary from presenters Benny and Bob. Bob is your standard all-American anchorman type, while ex-NASCAR champion Benny was obviously chosen for his experience rather than for his eloquence. B&B offer some fairly useful tips, but after a while their burblings start to grate, in much the same way as those in football games. Fortunately they can be gagged via the options menu.

EA have tried to strike a balance between a simulation and an arcade game, and have ended up in that uncomfortable position between the two. As is customary with a game of this type, the realism and car set-up can be customised to your liking, but it's not deep enough for the accuracy freaks, and not immediate enough for those raised on *Daytona USA*. Anyone who accelerates away from the start thinking they can power-

slide round the first bend will be in for a shock, as the car refuses to respond to the appropriate combination of brake and steering before forcefully introducing itself to the wall. *NASCAR*'s driving model is fairly simple though, and once you

“NASCAR Revolution gives a great feeling of speed and can be genuinely exciting, but the game just hasn't got what it takes to challenge the leaders in the field”

know how much to slow down for each corner it's easily mastered.

MUM! IT'S NOT FAIR!

Things become a bit different as soon as you get into the racing. It's fairly easy to pass your opponents, even in simulation mode. However, whenever you get up close and personal you soon discover that they're a lot harder than you are, and anything more than the gentlest of nudges sends you careering off the track. If you're playing with full damage on, that usually means it's game over, or at least a slow trip to the pits which invariably puts you several laps behind everyone else. Even if you've opted for Arcade mode you usually end up losing about 30 positions (unless your cartwheeling car manages to cause enough of a traffic jam to slow down the field), which is bloody frustrating, especially if you're on the last lap of a race.

If you try to play the computer cars at their own game and nudge them in the same way, once again it's adieu to control and au revoir to your coveted top ten position, while they weave about for a while before shooting off into the distance. It may happen in real

life, but so did Maradona's 'hand of God' travesty, and that didn't make it into *FIFA*. On top of that, when you hit the Escape key before wearily reloading, you are 'treated' to 20 seconds of your car meandering towards the pits – which you can't skip through.

A quick lesson to games designers (and you get paid for it, so I don't know why I'm telling you this for nothing): players should never be penalised excessively for actions that are beyond their control. Got that?

NASCAR Revolution could have been a front runner. It gives a great feeling of speed and (between the frustrating crashes) can be genuinely exhilarating. NASCAR fans who are familiar with the idiosyncrasies of the sport may well have more patience, but for the rest of us the game just hasn't got what it takes to challenge the leaders in the field. A missed opportunity. □

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Smooth, speedy graphics • Racing action can be immersive and frenetic • All the official NASCAR teams and drivers

DOWNERS Little variation in circuits/cars • Simple driving model • Can be very frustrating

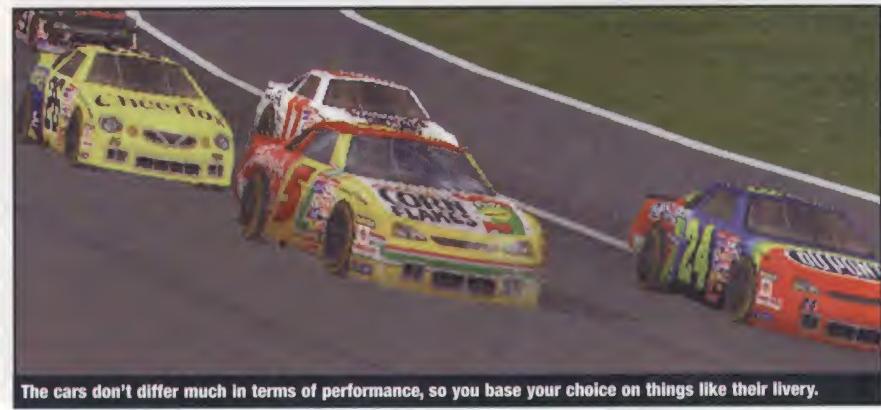
70 Nudged off the track by stronger opposition

BE DICK TRICKLE

Tonight, Murray, I'm going to be...

NASCAR racers are not the sort of coves you find lounging casually on their yachts at Monaco. Rather than (most of) the sleek international playboys of the Formula One world, these drivers are good ol' home boys brought up on a staple diet of mom's apple pie.

You can choose from any of the current season's competitors. They don't seem to differ in terms of performance though, which means that car choice is based on far more important things such as colour scheme and the name of the driver. And who could resist being legendary 'Mid-Western racing legend' Dick Trickle?



The cars don't differ much in terms of performance, so you base your choice on things like their livery.

★ DRIVETHROUGH

REVENGE

With 42 other cars on the track, it can at times be tempting to drive around the circuit like a lunatic: here's PC ZONE's guide to starting your very own *NASCAR* revolution



1 Go against the flow. Let not the oppressors dictate your direction of travel.



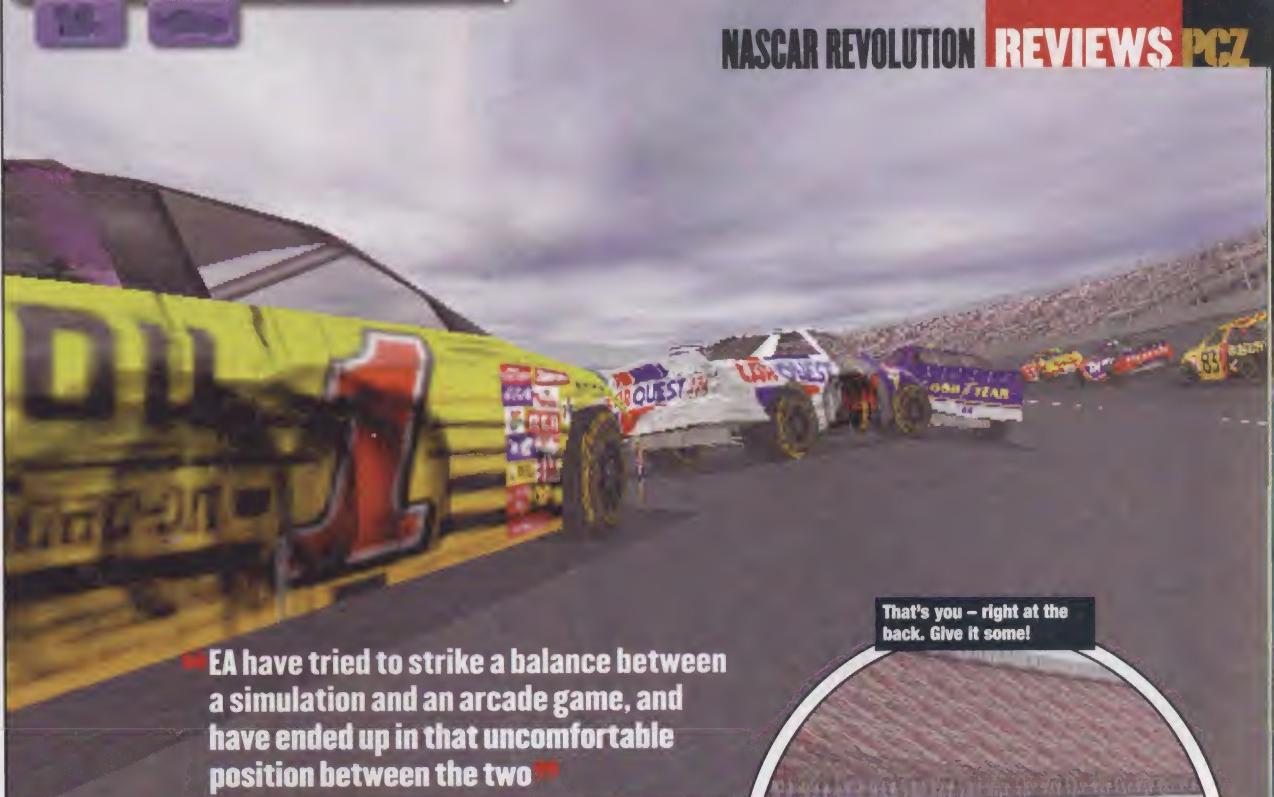
2 Nerves of steel, comrade. Do not deviate from your chosen path...



3 Ha! Let the pig-dogs feel the weight of your throbbing steel.



4 Yes! Do you feel it, comrade? You are free! Freeeee!

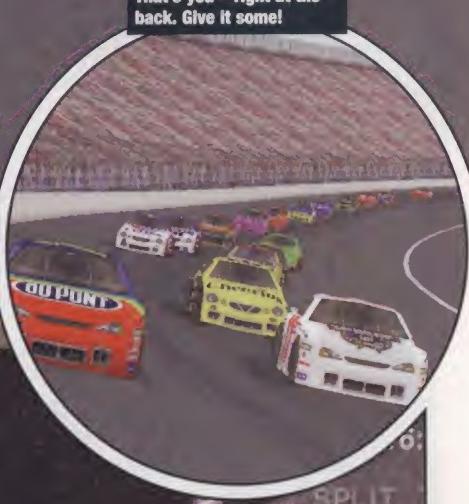


EA have tried to strike a balance between a simulation and an arcade game, and have ended up in that uncomfortable position between the two.

That's you – right at the back. Give it some!

All the damage in *NASCAR Revolution* is meticulously detailed, so you owe it to the programmers to cause as much as possible.

You can 'check your six' for opponents at the flick of a button – useful for gloating.



Fifth place and looking good. The dark area on the track marks the racing line. However, everyone wants in.



Yeah, we love you all, guys, but this get-together clearly isn't working.



Loads of other cars. They look good and move smoothly, but make no noise whatsoever.



The lady standing on the blue dot is about to launch the Mindblade spell at the guy on the green dot.

RETURN TO KRONDOR

★ £34.99 • Sierra • Out now

Five years in the making, *Return To Krondor* is finally here and in the shops. Paul Mallinson asks if it was really worth the wait

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 24Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards and 3D cards **WE SAY** A 3D card doesn't make that big a difference, but more memory does

**PCZONE
RECOMMENDED**

As the second computer game based on Raymond E Feist's successful *Riftwar* series of books (*Betrayal At Krondor* being the first), *Return To Krondor* has a lot to live up to. After five long years in development hell, passing through the hands of ill-fated US development studio 7th Level and eventually ending up in the lap of

Sierra, *Return To Krondor* is finally finished, boxed and in our hands.

This role-playing adventure borrows many different styles of play in an attempt to create something innovative in design but traditional in feel, and to some extent it works very well. Your view of the game is tightly controlled by a series of cameras. Unlike games such as *Redguard* (PCZ#75, 89%), *Return To Krondor* utilises pre-rendered backdrops to depict the action, with real-time 3D models making up everything else – very much like *Alone In The Dark* (PCZ#38, 80%) and *Resident Evil 2* (PCZ#75,

90%). That's hardly a leap forward for the genre, but it is.

Combat is turn-based, à la *Final Fantasy VII* (PCZ#66, 93%), and the rest is a mixture of *Ultima Underworld*, *Eye Of The Beholder* and *Ecstatica* (PCZ#62, 80%), all wrapped-up in a Raymond E Feist-approved coating.

BOOKS ETC

The game unfolds over a series of chapters, each introduced by a short voice-over. This obsession with books runs through the whole game – the options screen is one big bookcase, and each book a collection of previous saved games. Starting a new book enables the game to be configured to your specifications.

First off there are three skill levels, Easy, Medium and Hard, which relate mostly to the frequency and difficulty of combat. Then there's Game Focus: Fighter, Balanced or Mage. Most people would assume this to be the type of character you

choose to play as, but it isn't. This option defines how magic/combat-oriented the overall game is. Want lots of magic? Choose Mage. Prefer hack-and-slash to wand-waving? Choose Fighter.

The Combat Statistics option toggles the numbers shown in

“At the end of the day, this potentially excellent game is let down by a number of niggly problems... If you're the patient type though, you may just warm to it”

combat, and should be switched on unless you like to make it hard for yourself. The Combat Speed option doesn't actually speed up the combat as you would expect, but instead affects the animation. Speeding up combat *should* have been an option, because you could argue that it's too slow.

Finally there's an option to choose how your character picks locks and disarms traps. These play a very important part in *Return To Krondor*, because you

can find lots of locks and traps along the way. The default Trap Lock setting is Reaction, and to succeed in this mode you have to master double-clicking the mouse to stop a swinging pendulum at the right moment. When in Dice Roll mode, your fate is decided by

some invisible number crunching inside your PC. Whether you trust its judgement or not is your choice entirely. And then it's into the game proper, making sure you've chosen wisely because there's no changing things afterwards with a handy pull-down menu.

ROBBING DEAD PEOPLE

As Squire James, your immediate mission is to meet and escort a friendly sorceress back to the



KRONDOR
Make it through the first chapter and things improve.

"I'm buggered if I can find me way out of this castle, love."



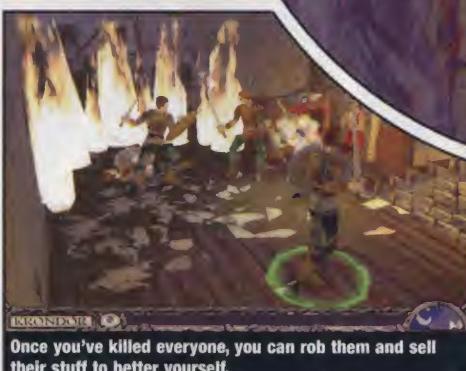
Get something right and your characters are awarded experience points.



It all gets a bit sinister later on in the game – take a look at this poor chap.



Return To Krondor's background graphics are atmospheric, but look a bit 'plasticy'.



Once you've killed everyone, you can rob them and sell their stuff to better yourself.



You can cycle through a number of different camera angles during combat.

ALSO CONSIDER

REDGUARD (Virgin, £39.99)

Seriously beautiful pirate adventure set in a time of dragons and magic. Great 3D graphics, a decent story and plenty of action make this a winner.

PCZ #75, 89%

LANDS OF LORE III (LucasArts, £34.99)

More stats, more objects, more magic and more fun than pretty much every other RPG out there. Slightly racy graphics though.

PCZ #74, 90%

MASK OF ETERNITY (Sierra, £34.99)

This and Redguard are extremely similar titles, although Mask Of Eternity is more 'traditional' than Virgin's effort.

PCZ #71, 89%

suddenly finds that all is not well. People are being murdered and the locals are getting restless. Wandering into one of the many houses scattered around the city invariably results in an attack of some kind. And it's at this point that the role-playing really begins to kick in.

As mentioned earlier, combat is turn-based, and almost everything is handled by the mouse: left-click an enemy and you fight them with whatever weapon you have readied; right-click your character to cast spells, access the inventory, end turn etc. Of course, your character's current attributes affect how you perform in combat, and building experience levels plays a big part in that. Killing bad guys awards points that can be used later to bump up your character's skills a level. Robbing dead people of their possessions also helps, in that you can always visit one of Krondor's many shops and sell the stuff to buy bigger and better

weapons and any potions you need to help out in combat.

ROOM FOR FOUR

Once you've got Squire James on a roll, the game opens up further with the introduction of party members. There's room for four people in your party, all of whom follow James's every move and contribute greatly in combat. Each party member has their own inventory/attribute/spell-casting screen, from which objects can be manipulated and stats examined. Unfortunately though, you have to flick from one screen to another to see any effect an item is having on your character. Mages also have their own screen which lists available spells, and there's a further menu screen available for when the party is resting. In all, too many screens.

Despite all the faffing around behind the scenes (it can take a tediously long time to sift through four full inventories, assessing unknown items and selling them

at a shop), *Return To Krondor's* plot and story are propped up well by some decent set-pieces. The dialogue, apart from a few dodgy Dick Van Dyke-style cockney accents, is fairly good. Later – when you're hard enough to start terrorising the locals for information – it improves no end, and talking to the many non-player characters suddenly becomes quite interesting. The many in-engine cut-scenes also add a lot to the game, even though the character modelling and animation hold them back a bit, and the innovative trap/lock disarm puzzles are compelling.

At the end of the day, this potentially excellent game is let down by a number of niggly problems. For example: in shops there's no real bartering process (which takes the buzz out of shopping, and often results in you being ripped off by shrewd shopkeepers); you can't select multiple items, instead you have to pick things up one by one (too

much in a game with this many objects); and savegame names can only be up to eight characters in length – why? These, the screen-swapping problems mentioned earlier, and the fact that the first few hours of the game are pretty dull, make *Return To Krondor* a slightly frustrating experience initially. If you're the patient type and are prepared to put the hours in, though, you may just warm to it. Just like I did. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Very large and very involving • Atmospheric lighting • Good music • Combat is fun

DOWNS Time-consuming menu system • Takes a while to get going • Graphics not brilliant • Can't change combat speed

80 Compelling fantasy romp

palace. Moving around is achieved by either pointing the cursor at where you want your character to walk, or by using the cursor keys (holding down Ctrl at the same time makes him run).

Exploring Krondor, James

Corsairs



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PC
ROM



..... Become the most dreaded privateer of all time

For the first time, direct your own boardings, and control each member of your team

..... Control your fleet with an iron fist

SET SAIL TO SCOUR THE SEAS OF THE SOUTH



GTA LONDON 1969

£19.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

Let us take you by the hand and drive you through the streets of GTA London. We'll show you something you've never seen before. Tour guide: Charlie Brooker

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** A copy of *Grand Theft Auto* **WE SAY** With a 3D card, the minimum specs are fine

Now here's a welcome prospect: a mission pack for *Grand Theft Auto* (PCZ #58, 92%) that whisks the game away from its contemporary Stateside setting and sends it hurtling backward through the dark purple tunnel of time, leaving it stranded, kicking and screaming in old London town circa 1969.

Unless we're mistaken, stupid or just plain wrong, this is the first time 'Swinging London' in all its absurd *Austin Powers* glory has been used as the backdrop for a game. If you're a Brit, it's a pleasing make-over. Out go the wailing *Starsky And Hutch* cop

sirens, in come old-school bee-baw numbers; out go Studebakers and Cadillacs, in come Minis and Bentleys (well, they don't use the actual names, but close-as-dammit

“The main disappointment is that as a mission pack the London make-over doesn't add anything fundamentally new”

pseudonyms) and references to Michael Caine; those shadowy Italian-American wiseguys who muttered at you down dark alleys in the original game are replaced by gruff, growling cockneys; while the soundtrack consists largely of *Sound Gallery*-style cheesy

listening workouts.

For some, this is worth the price of entry alone.

Of vital importance, of course, is the city itself. Whereas the sprawling metropolises of the original *GTA* had made-up names and made-up locales, *GTA London* is set in, well, London, dumbo. Several of the major landmarks are there – Big Ben, Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park – and the streets are cluttered with scarlet double-deckers and black taxicabs. Particularly satisfying for residents is the use of 'proper' district names: if you're in south-west Camden, and you're told to

high-tail it to north-east Battersea, you've got a fair idea of which way to head, without having to refer to the map or locator arrow. If you live in, say, Manchester, it means nothing, of course, but for native Londoners it's a hoot. Yes, a *hoot*.

BUT...

But. But but but... Despite the changes, despite the new sound effects (passers-by shout "Twat!" and other British pleasantries at you when you try to kill them), despite the use of real place names and landmarks, it doesn't really *feel* like London. Which is a pretty major flaw when you think about it.

The main problem is that the engine demands compromise. *Grand Theft Auto*'s streets are based on the grid system, which, by happy coincidence, is also prevalent in American cities. There's no room for curved roads, or even diagonal ones. Check out the London *A To Z* and you can see what a hotch-potch mess the city's streets actually are, winding hither and thither like the hairline veins in a drunk's bloodshot eye. By contrast, the streets in *GTA London* are serene, orderly. Not like the real thing at all.

Still, it's a game, not a documentary, so perhaps we're being picky? The main disappointment is that as a

ALSO CONSIDER

GRAND THEFT AUTO (BMG) The original and best. If you've got this, you don't really *need* the London missions – unless you're *rabidly anti-American*, that is. **PCZ #58, 92%**

mission pack the London makeover doesn't really add anything fundamentally new to the proceedings (apart from driving on the left). The new missions are nicely varied (not to mention funny – especially the one where you kidnap tourists on a sightseeing bus), but they're also very familiar.

If you loved *GTA* and you've been hankering for more, go ahead. We love the setting, the music, the sense of humour... but we're more interested in getting our hands on *GTA II*. Which with any luck will be set in London too. Awright, guv'nor. Gor blimey.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS More of the same *GTA* madness • Shagadelic Swinging London setting • British swear words and everything

OWNERS Nothing really new

70 A well-intentioned add-on for a still-fun ageing classic



Battersea power station. Tall, ain't it? Ooh... I feel... sick...



Piccadilly: with ads for Fab Cola and Pissbeer lager!



"Come down, Charles! One will kill oneself!" (splat).



"Fab. Groovy, bab... Out of the way, tourists!"



Trafalgar Square: pigeons not included.



Don't smoke and drive.



Crikey, it's the filth!



Big Ben. Well it's supposed to be, anyway.



Gor blimey, guy, that's a bit of a nasty tumble. Dear oh dear.



Lazy Sunday ahftnoon... in Swinging Sixties Hyde Park.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEASON 1998-99

★ £39.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

Bask in the glory of Manchester United or wallow in the despair of Arsenal. Steve Hill is in the dugout

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS 3D**
acceleration through Direct3D **WE SAY** You need a P266 with 32Mb RAM and a 3D card to make it worthwhile



Take a football game, marginally tweak it, attach a weighty licence, put it in a box and sell it in droves to a gullible public. It didn't work for *Michael Owen's World League Soccer '99* (PCZ #72, 84%), so Eidos are hoping that it will be third time lucky for this latest incarnation of the Silicon Dreams football game.

It first saw the light of day less than a year ago as *World League Soccer* (PCZ #65, 70%). It reappeared a couple of months later in the wake of Owen's freak World Cup performance and now takes a bit of a diversion with the aid of club football's most prestigious competition.

Yes, it's the same game, and only a drunkard or a liar would claim otherwise. But it's by no means a bad game, and this is

slumped in front of the telly with a selection of pastry items and cold drinks. If that sounds familiar, you'll feel at home immediately with *UEFA Champions League Season 1998-99* because it is effectively an interactive version of ITV's coverage of this season's competition, right down to the evocatively warbling theme tune and the scudding clouds intro.

Thankfully, we are spared Bob Wilson's rictus grin, but he does introduce each match before handing over to the dream team of Big Ron and Brian Moore, who may have officially retired from commentating, but who seems to be carving out an alternative career in the world of video games. The banter between the two is particularly impressive. At one point, Atkinson even pleads: "Stop wittering, Moore." If only.

The ubiquitous Atkinson (is there anything this man won't do for money?) peppers the game with his tried and tested lines, including the classic "He scores goals for fun", along with "If in

ALSO CONSIDER

FIFA '99 (EA Sports, £39.99) Still the football game of choice here at ZONE HQ, this is going to take some dislodging. *FIFA 2000*, anyone?

PCZ #71, 92%

ACTUA SOCCER 3 (Gremlin

Interactive, £39.99) Close but no cigar, this is still a good-looking, very playable effort.

PCZ #72, 89%

SENSIBLE SOCCER EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION (GT Interactive, £29.99)

Largely the preserve of bluff old traditionalists, this is the way football games used to be.

PCZ #69, 90%

MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99 (Eidos Interactive, £34.99)

Virtually the same game as *UEFA*, but with different teams, most of which you've never heard of.

PCZ #72, 84%

IF YOU KNOW YOUR HISTORY

As an added treat, vintage teams from the past are available, from 1960 to the present. These include the great Man Utd team of '68, as well as the halcyon years of The Mighty Liverpool, with many players sporting authentic Harry Enfield-style muzzles and perms.



Liverpool fans can cut out and keep this pic – they're three goals up!

which can often make all the difference between a good game and an indifferent one. The pace is fairly measured, which is well suited to European football. Plenty of time on the ball is available and some intricate moves can be put together, incorporating a number of passes.

UEFA Champions League may lack the immediacy of *FIFA '99* (PCZ #71, 92%), and it certainly takes some getting used to, but once a decent level of proficiency is attained, the game feels very natural. Goals certainly have to be earned and chances taken carefully – it isn't simply a case of having plenty of shots on the off-chance that one will go in.

Counter-attacking also plays a big part in the game, and some particularly realistic end-to-end encounters are possible. The headers in *World League Soccer* are generally considered to be the best in any football game, and this remains the case, with plenty of purchase available from a clearance – although it is still quite hard to actually score with your swede. A lot of goals come from running on to adroitly threaded-through balls on the

edge of the area and burying the ball into the bottom corner. This is still a tricky manoeuvre to pull off and you have to keep your eye on players making runs off the ball while holding up play with the man in possession. The keepers are also liable to the odd spillage, and frantic goalmouth scrambles often ensue.

WATCH TOGGER

The Champions League competition has been recreated faithfully, starting at the actual group stages and ignoring the two qualifying rounds that took place. This at least saves Man Utd from having to negotiate crack Polish outfit Lodz, and also ensures that no Scottish or Welsh teams get a look in, much to the distress of followers of Celtic or Barry Town.

Clearly, for Arsenal and Man Utd fans, the game is a godsend, although it will be interesting to see how many copies the game sells in, say, Liverpool or Birmingham.

Football fans are, by and large, bitter men, and this may even extend into the world of virtual reality computer games. The now defunct Philips brought out a

Champions League game about three years ago and it disappeared without trace – although, in all fairness, it wasn't helped by the fact that it was absolute rubbish.

This certainly isn't the case with *UEFA Champions League Season 1998-99*, which is definitely the best Champions League game in the world ever.

Cynics will obviously point to the fact that *FIFA '99* features a Champions League competition anyway, and they'd be well within their rights to do so. We're not forcing you to buy *UEFA* at gunpoint or anything, but if you do buy it you certainly won't be disappointed. Particularly if you're a Gooner or a Manc.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS

- Polished presentation
- Authentic teams

DOWNTERS

- Only one competition

86 Very playable
very polished
very nice



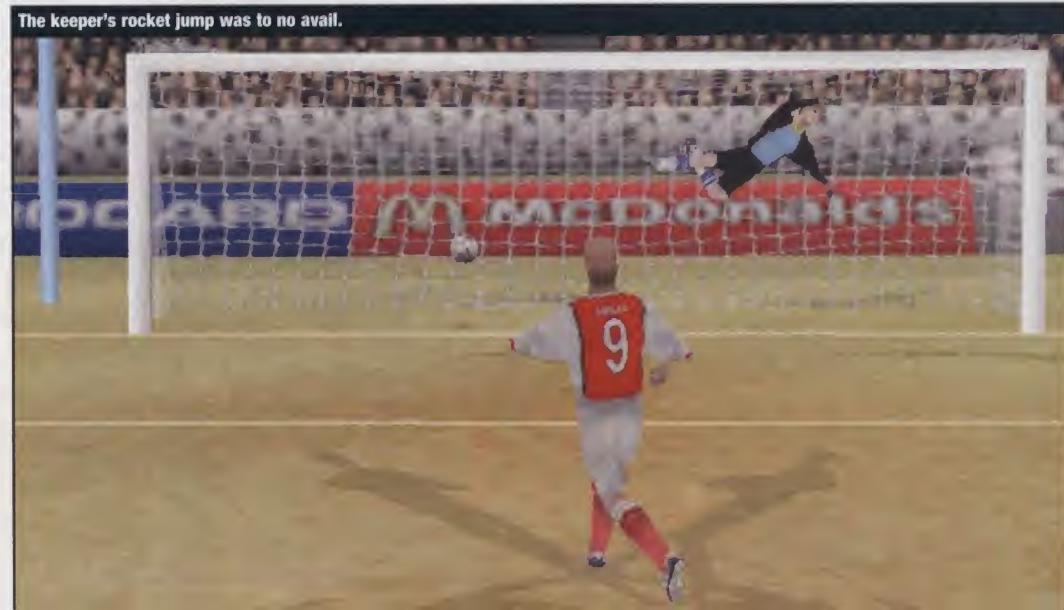
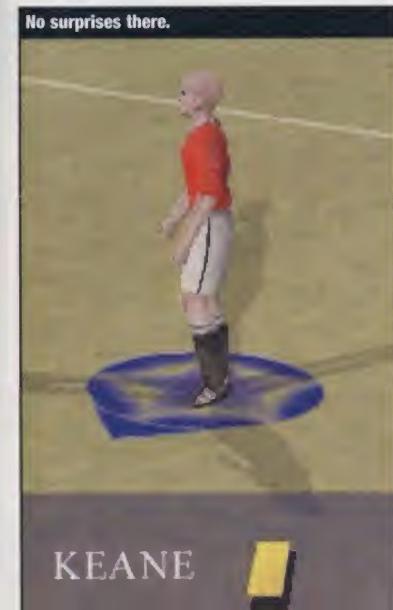
No apologies to Man Utd fans.



The game also features scenarios taken from this season's Champions League.



That's got to be worth a pop.



UPRISING 2: LEAD AND DESTROY

£39.99 • 3DO • Out now



Night missions are the most atmospheric.



Bits of the game are really rather fetching, don't you think?



An enemy citadel does its level best to thwart me.

Up close and blocky: unlike vehicles, troops are still bitmaps.



My tanks get down to business.



The overhead view shows your base management options.

Although *Uprising* (PCZ #60, 79%) was single-handedly responsible for the first-person action/real-time strategy genre (or FARTS, for short), there was one tiny problem: it wasn't very good. Or playable. So nobody bought it.

Not long after its release, Activision came up with *Battlezone* (PCZ #62, 81%) to try and make the FARTS concept a little more accessible. Like *Uprising*, it promised a delicious cocktail of the two most popular flavours – *Quake*-style action combined with *Red Alert*-style strategy – but the final bottled product tasted like Dutch lager: *Quake* fans found it too weak, and the *Red Alert* crowd got addled and threw up in the airing cupboard.

Uprising 2: Lead And Destroy attempts to change all that. The

“The focus is on story-based combat, with the micro-management of troops being handled entirely by the computer”

focus is now on story-based combat, with the micro-management of troops being handled entirely by the computer. This means that your support units and troops can at last get about by themselves and pick fights without you having to give them the go-ahead.

CANDY FOR THE EYE

Your enemy (the oddly named Trichordata Sauraformae Sapiens) aren't human, and your pursuit of them requires a good deal of interstellar trekking, hopping between planets and admiring of exotic alien landscapes. This is perhaps the most obvious departure from the previous instalment, where the bad guys were human and not quite so well-travelled.

With regard to visuals, gone are the plump sprites of old, and in their place are smart new

It's time once again to leap into a tank and battle to save humankind. Asleep at the wheel is Phil Wand

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM SUPPORTS TCP/IP, IPX/modem and direct cable multiplayer **WE SAY** P200 and 64Mb RAM recommended

ALSO CONSIDER

WARZONE 2100 (Eidos, £39.99)

Great-looking, great-playing 3D real-time strategy game with top-notch AI and a neat interface. **PCZ #75, 90%**

URBAN ASSAULT (Microsoft, £34.99)

Atmospheric and addictive strategy game that's hard to master but rewarding when you do.

PCZ #67, 85%

BATTLEZONE (Activision, £12.99)

The best-selling first-person action/real-time strategy game that took the *Uprising* concept and did it better. **PCZ #62, 81%**

weaponry and defence systems, much like in the *X-Wing* series. That functionality has now been removed. And while newcomers won't know it's missing, old hands will bemoan its absence. You can also no longer assign different weapons to different turrets; instead, the first slot is assigned permanently to the first weapon, which can prove to be a bit of a bind.

Overall, *Uprising* is very playable and reasonably enjoyable, but it's really nothing special. It's too similar to its predecessor, doing nothing to enhance the genre that game created. For that reason we can't recommend it. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS More straightforward than its predecessor • Easy and often fun to play • Instant-action alternative to mission-based play • Award-winning sky textures • Scenario builder

DOWNTERS Nothing we haven't seen before • Missions not challenging enough • Sombre colours and graphics • Sound effects date from the '70s

70 Lacking a heart and soul

EXPENDABLE



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graphics **TRULY FANTASTIC**

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PC ZONE - APRIL 99



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For Full 3D-accelerator card support please check out www.rage.co.uk

LANDER

★ £39.99 • Psygnosis • Out now

Sending a man to the moon is small potatoes compared to mastering *Lander*, but Craig Vaughan finds that it's worth it

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D accelerator card **SUPPORTS** multiplayer via a network connection **WE SAY** As smooth as silk on a PII 233 with 32Mb RAM and a 3Dfx or D3D-compatible 3D card



ALSO CONSIDER

V2000 (Grolier Interactive, £39.99) An absorbing 3D shooter which has a similarly devilish control system to *Lander*'s. It's slightly inferior graphically, but has a larger variety of weapons and a cracking blend of strategy and all-out blasting. **PCZ #69, 90%**

SUB CULTURE (Ubi Soft, £29.95) Shares the same inertia-driven control method, but lacks the variety of missions. Graphically it's showing its age, and the pace is rather pedestrian. **PCZ #57, 75%**

Love it or loathe it, retro-gaming is here to stay. This nostalgic offering is inspired by Atari's 1979 classic, *Lunar Lander*. Looking back, I'm ashamed to admit that my childhood memories include spending chortle-filled afternoons watching my hapless friends waste their dinner money trying to land their fragile wireframed spacecraft on planet Zog. Unfortunately for them, they failed to grasp the concepts of inertia and gravity, having chosen to study pottery instead of physics.

Over the years, my mastery of *Lander*-related gaming flourished when Firebird Software 'borrowed' its inertia-driven engine for *Thrust*, and then, more recently, Grolier Interactive brought us full circle with *V2000* (PCZ#69, 90%). Although gameplay twists were added with each new 'tribute', the control

mechanics remained unchanged, and 'thankfully' they've been left alone here too. I say thankfully, but only after considerable teeth-gnashing, monitor-bashing, Psygnosis-cursing frustration.

KEEPING CONTROL

Mallo had warned me that the controls of this 3D shooter were "interesting". Intrigued, I dived in, applying a modicum of thrust to take off and watching in disbelief as my ship hurtled away, upside down, over the horizon. Thankfully, a quick jab at the keyboard soon 'self-righted' my ship and restored some dignity.

The mission brief informed me that I needed to collect three pods, so off I went, very slowly, to fetch the first. An hour later I was actually smiling as I pulled up at Waypoint 1, undamaged and upright. My grin soon disappeared, though, as ground-based rocket launchers off-

"I watched in disbelief as my ship hurtled away, upside down, over the horizon"

loaded into me. I wasn't dead, just upside down (again), disorientated and low on energy.

Moments later, the entrance to an underground complex emerged, and it dawned on me that Psygnosis expected me to



There isn't a lot to see or do between waypoints.



Neglecting to turn off the furnace ends in disaster.

accomplish in the claustrophobic confines of hell what had taken me an age to achieve in the open air: staying airborne, upright and alive. As my ship bounced off

concentration required is very similar. Before long I was swaying in time with the mouse as I rocked and shifted around the caves, in scenes reminiscent of *Descent* (PCZ#25, 94%) and *Forsaken* (PCZ#63, 94%).

Deep underground, I recovered a pod, but my initial glee turned to curiosity as my tractor beam grabbed it, suspending it in mid-air under my ship. I wondered why it hadn't been tucked away safely in a cargo hold, but then I moved off and found out: the pod was heavy. It was weighing down

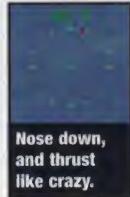
OF MICE AND MEN



Success in *Lander* requires a subtle blend of skill and know-how

To make progress in the game, you need to master the clever mouse/keyboard control technique. Initially you spend ages yanking

the mouse left and right, hoping to move in the corresponding direction, but the left and right mouse movements only rock your ship from side to side. While this is a crucial manoeuvre for the underground sections, combined with excessive thrusting it causes you to flip out. Use the keyboard to point to where you want to go, and then apply thrust and lower the nose of your craft to move off. Eventually you can become so skilled that combining the two manoeuvres becomes second nature.



Nose down, and thrust like crazy.



Psygnosis in '3D carnival' retro-release shock.



my ship. It was buggering up all the precise inertia calculations that had got me thus far, and the damn thing became uncontrollable. Imagine towing an HGV trailer using a 50cc moped and a bungee rope and you'll get the idea. The bastards.

SEEING THE LIGHT

A good while later, it all clicked. There was no single defining moment, but something definitely 'gave' unexpectedly. Suddenly I was turning deftly on a sixpence, applying measured doses of

thrust and counter-thrust, hovering with precision and controlling my ship instinctively. It was, dare I say it, intuitive. No, really.

In any case, anyone concerned about their lack of digital dexterity can relax in the safe learning environment of the instructive training missions. Although these puppy walkers show you the ropes, they deny access to the goodies you can acquire as a mercenary.

There's a diverse range of missions to tackle, from simple, low-risk/low-pay transport jobs,

Contending with the hostile weather as well as physics.

It's so difficult, there might as well be a level that you have to play completely in the dark.

to lethal seek-and-destroy kamikaze sorties which are far more rewarding financially. There are loads of ships on offer, from the cheap and cheerful Hopper (a workhorse with little firepower) to the outrageously expensive but obscenely well-equipped Roche 81 (supremely powerful and armed to the teeth). The local armory will, at a cost, equip your ship with anything from basic guns through to Armageddon-inducing firepower.

FOLLOW THE PLOT

Although the 29 single-player missions initially appear detached and self-contained, there's the thread of a cleverly crafted plot woven through them, which unfolds as you progress. You'll be at this for months, so it's just as well there's plenty to see and do. Unfortunately, the graphics are a mixed bunch. The interior scenes

work superbly, with the sin of bad 'camera tracking' craftily avoided by – get this – the use of wireframe graphics. Like chocolate pretzels, it sounds daft but works a treat. Any foreground

mouse-melting mayhem. Having said that, it's undeniably the control mechanics that make this game. There will be those who shy away from the scale of the challenge, and that's a shame,

“Suddenly I was turning deftly on a sixpence, hovering with precision and controlling my ship instinctively”

scenery that would obscure your craft simply dissolves into a wireframe outline, which is eerie but stunningly well-implemented.

Unfortunately, the exterior levels fail to impress. Even on a ninja PII 300 the scenery builds up at uncomfortably close quarters. In terms of sound, though, everything is shipshape, with meaty explosions and loads of speech adding to the absorbing atmosphere. The only recurring problem is your craft's predilection for getting stuck under other objects. At no point does this prevent progress – you always seem to be able to wriggle free – but it does slow the tempo and increase the frustration, especially in those early hours of

because any game that can evoke such a wide range of emotions is worthy of a place in any dedicated gamer's collection. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS

Challenging control method • Engaging plot • Incredibly rewarding gameplay • Clever interior graphics engine

DOWNERS

Challenging control method • 'Sticky' ship bonds with other objects • Slack exterior graphics engine

85 Nerve-racking, stress-inducing fun



HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC III

★ £44.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

Popping out of his own fantasy world into someone else's: Andrew Wright

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** DirectX-compatible sound and graphics cards **WE SAY** P166 with 32Mb of RAM; needs Windows 95/98 or NT4

ALSO CONSIDER

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC II

(Ubi Soft, £9.99) Released in 1996, this was a big improvement on the original. While it's a little dated now, Ubi Soft have just released a Gold pack with extra scenarios.

PCZ #47, 87%

WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING

(Broderbund, £34.99) The overwhelming similarity between *Heroes III* and *Warlords III* means it's hard to come up with a winner. Both are absorbing, addictive and fun to play; *Heroes'* new underworlds and dungeons add value, but *Warlords* is the better strategy game.

PCZ #67, 90%

If the phrase 'Might And Magic' seems familiar, it's probably because it has been on the boxes of at least eight PC games to date. *Might And Magic I, II, III, IV, V* and *VI* were first-person hack-and-slash role-playing games, each set in the same Dungeons & Dragons-style fantasy world. We didn't think a lot of them – *Might And Magic VI* scored 59 per cent in PCZ #66 – but it didn't stop Ubi Soft coming up with *Might And Magic VII*, which is due for release soon.

Meanwhile, the other two games, *Heroes Of Might And Magic I* and *II*, are set in exactly the same fantasy universe, but the key here is strategy rather

than role-playing. Combat is between armies, rather than individuals, and the game centres on exploring, recruiting armies, building improvements to your towns and scouring the map for treasure, which belongs to the first player to snatch it.

SHRINE LIKE A STAR

There are dozens of shrines, temples and wandering characters on the map, many of which can add one of the game's 64 spells to your hero's book, or train him instantly in one of the 28 secondary skills available, which come in basic, advanced and expert guises. Ballistics, for example, enables your heroes to attack towns with catapults. Others boost spell power, earn additional gold and even recruit dead enemies from the battlefield to serve as skeletons or zombies.

Routine movement and exploration in *Heroes III* is carried out on the two-dimensional overhead adventure map with an icon bar to the right. From here, you can access any hero or town under your control. When the fighting starts, the game switches to the combat screen, an abstract, hex-divided battlefield with more than just a passing resemblance to SSI's masterpiece, *Fantasy General* (PCZ #64, 71%).

Popping up in between are the town and hero screens, where you actually make the decisions, swap troops and artefacts from one hero to another, trade various items on the free market to



In *Might And Magic*'s green and peasant land.



The undead come from the Necropolis. And Dudley.



Spell-casting in combat can make all the difference.



An underground seven-a-side battle.



Heroes can meet up and swap things like magic items, troops, make-up tips...

“The screens are well-planned and neatly designed. A single click is all that's usually required to move from one to another”

than role-playing. Combat is between armies, rather than individuals, and the game centres on exploring, recruiting armies, building improvements to your towns and scouring the map for treasure, which belongs to the first player to snatch it.

Town buildings boost your armies or increase your gold or

balance resource production, and add town buildings. The screens are well-planned and neatly designed. A single click – never more than two – is all that's usually required to move from one screen to any other.

Your objective in *Heroes III* is to build bigger and better armies so you can dominate the map,

take over things like sawmills and gold mines, and wipe out the opposition. Disappointingly, there's very little diplomacy or negotiation in this game – it's kill or be killed.

WE CAN BE HEROES

Single-player mode gives you the choice of one of 42 pre-defined scenarios or one of three initial campaigns.

If the bundled scenarios become a yawn, there's a map editor, which enables you to create maps and new scenarios for up to eight players. You can multi-play over a network, by modem, over the Internet, hot-seat or linked by a null modem serial cable. Expect to do a lot of waiting, though. It's a turn-based game, after all.

You start *Heroes III* with a town, a hero and a small army of creatures under your command. There are eight different town types, including castle, fortress, rampart, dungeon, inferno, tower, stronghold and necropolis, each

producing seven different troop types from the 128 types available. Start with a rampart, for example, and you can recruit centaurs, dwarves, wood elves, dendroids, unicorns and green dragons. Dungeons are limited to troglodytes, beholders, harpies, medusas, minotaurs, manticores and red dragons.

Heroes come in 16 flavours and range from bog-standard fantasy fare, like knights and wizards, to more exotic characters, such as beastmasters and necromancers. Each town supports only two hero types: ramparts, for example, attract druids and rangers, while castles have knights and clerics. Not that you can't recruit other hero types – it's just that they're less likely to appear.

The most irritating feature is that you have to choose one of the 100-odd pre-defined heroes in the single-player scenarios, rather than being able to 'roll your own'; in campaign mode, you get no choice at all. Whatever happened to role-playing?

LET BATTLE COMMENCE

If you move your hero on to an enemy, you immediately activate the battle screen. Your troops – seven units at most – are set out on one side, with the enemy on the other, and in the middle are randomly placed obstacles to liven things up. The fastest troop types move first, and they can either fire ranged weapons or move close up for hand-to-hand combat. Unfortunately, that just about sums up the range of strategies on offer.

With seven a side and roughly equal forces, it's virtually impossible to find a winning strategy. If you have more ranged fire units, like archers, you can stand off and whittle down the enemy, but that way you lose more of

your own ranged fire units to counter-fire, and these units tend to be harder to replace and recruit. A hero with good combat spells can make a small difference but, in the end, the battles rely on luck more than skill. As always, whatever gods there are in the *Might And Magic* world are on the side of the big battalions.

Finding the right strategy on the adventure map isn't easy, either. You can't build new towns or fortresses, and once you've cleaned up the freebies you can only spread outwards.

There's nothing groundbreaking about *Heroes III*. Okay, it features 16-bit colour at 800x600 resolution, but although there's plenty of detail on the adventure map – and too much animation – it still looks somewhat dated. Mind you, it does have two levels – the surface and the underworld – which adds to the variety of the gameplay.

The big changes from *Heroes II* are to the game system itself, where there are bigger maps, more unit types, more spells and improved combat. Existing *Heroes* fans will be well chuffed. For many strategy gamers, it will seem inflexible and a bit too shallow, especially when compared to other games on the market.

And while it's often compelling enough to force us into 'one more turn' mode, I just can't for the life of me work out why. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Neat screens • Colourful maps • Absorbing and addictive gameplay • Good multiplayer

DOWNTERS Weak strategy
• Role-playing is non-existent
• Can't choose or design your hero

78 Shallow but addictive fantasy strategy game

The left-hand lot lay siege to a town – a difficult task without catapults.

Dungeons produce minotaurs, medusas and the like.

LIVING IN A FANTASY WORLD

Three small steps for you, one giant leap towards success in the game

When you start a game, you usually find yourself with a hero, a town and some troops. The first thing to do is explore the area and grab whatever resources and buildings are within easy reach. Your hero, a knight, has 80 pikemen and 41 archers, so he's well-equipped to take care of himself. Note the four ships, which can be used for transport.



Explore the coastline with the ships you're given.

When your hero has finished moving, go straight to the town screen. Each building in the town has a function, and is highlighted when you move the mouse over it. You can hire a limited number of extra troops in the town, and another hero or two to lead them. The more the merrier, because each can explore and 'flag' mines and buildings.



Go to town. Do some shopping – if you can find a parking space.

Level One knight Christian starts with a ballista and a healing tent. But he's weak in spells, so you need to send him off to earn experience and improve his performance. Most treasure items can be turned into experience, and entering some buildings gives you extra skills or bonus experience. It's a good idea to let only the main man enter buildings and interact with neutral creatures, as he then gains the points. Some heroes should be hired just for exploring at first. You can always develop them later if needed.

Send Level One knight Christian off to gain some experience.



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SOUTH PARK

★ £39.99 • Acclaim • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM
ALSO REQUIRES 3D accelerator card **SUPPORTS** All major soundcards **WE SAY** Requires 3D card, so okay

This is one crazy game. Those familiar with Comedy Central's hit show *South Park* will no doubt have expected nothing less, it being one of the sickest/funniest cartoons ever made for TV.

Mutant turkeys, drooling morons, piss-soaked snowballs, farting dolls and profane language all feature heavily in this relentless 3D shoot 'em up of ill repute, and, rather sadly, the end result is somewhat hard to like and difficult to recommend.

The main problem is that although *South Park* is faithful to the TV series in almost every respect, the game is highly repetitive. *South*

Shoot the big turkey in the ringpiece.



Park is essentially a first person shoot 'em up with a fairly slick 3D engine and *Quake*-like controls. The graphics are extremely colourful, the music well-produced and the voices apt. The gameplay, on the other hand, consists of little more

than fending off wave after wave of marauding monsters by using outlandish weaponry dished out during the course of the game. For the first half an hour you love it – the screeching turkeys; the swearing; the music – but after that it all seems to get a bit too much. The relentless 'gobbling' of the mutant turkeys rapidly becomes extremely unnerving, and the infrequent end-of-level guardians do little to lift the proceedings. Dispatch the turkeys and they're replaced by mutant Big Gay Als...

The cause of all this lunacy is a comet on a collision course with Earth, which is explained by Chef (by far the best character in the series, and wonderfully played by Isaac 'Shaff' Hayes) in a series of excellent 3D cartoons.

Virtually every character from the series eventually makes an appearance at some point in the game, but unfortunately these cameos add little to the overall gameplay experience and seem little more than window dressing. The multiplayer game makes up for a proportion of this, but not enough to make anyone other than the most die-hard *South Park* fans to part with their money.

Paul Mallinson

PCZONE VERDICT

65%



South Park will not appeal to Daily Mail readers.



The weapons are OTT. Here's the Moo 2000, a gas rocket launcher.



This looks familiar.



It's amazing the trouble you can get into hanging around at the docks.

SIN MISSION PACK: WAGES OF SIN

★ £19.99 • Activision • Out now

TECH SPECS

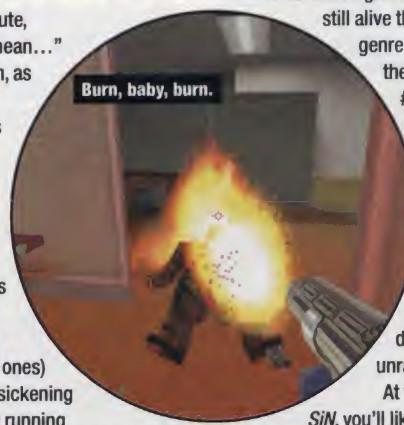
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM
SUPPORTS All major 3D cards **WE SAY** Don't bother without a 3D card

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

"Wait a minute, they can't mean..."
Yes they can, as John Blade discovers.

Hideously deformed mutants are once again appearing in the city of Freeport, and it's down to him and his trusty sidekick JC to get to the bottom of it.

The cheesecake intro sets the scene, and what follows are 17 action-packed levels (plus some new deathmatch ones) incorporating the obligatory sickening violence, bawdy humour and running around like a blue-arsed fly opening doors and so on. The story is suitably twisted, and even has characters named after employees of *Sin* developers Ritual, with the main bad guy going by the name of Manero – clearly a guarded reference to their Dallas



Burn, baby, burn.

neighbour John Romero. Other incestuous touches include the liberal use of a torch, wall-mounted health stations, ropes to climb, and a bald scientist with a moustache.

The 3D action game will eat itself, but while it's still alive this is a decent example of the genre and kicks some life back into the largely underrated *Sin* (PCZ #70, 91%). The new weapons and vehicles are neat, and the levels are varied, requiring a combination of stealth, cunning and good old-fashioned firepower. The real-world locations are obviously a good thing, and the game manages to draw you in as the madness unravels.

At the end of the day, if you liked *Sin*, you'll like this. As Blade says: "I'm gonna make you my bitch." Which is nice.

Steve Hill

PCZONE VERDICT

84%

throttle it



SUPERBIKE
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

SBK
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superbike world championship pc cd-rom

Don your leathers and experience the most realistic and exhilarating racing sim yet with the only officially licensed game of the Superbike World Championship. Featuring totally accurate bike physics and authentic racing circuits and riders, this is a game to test even the most experienced biker.



MEGASTORES

BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD DO U

£19.99 • GT Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** Yep, runs fine on minimum spec

Another Beavis & Butt-head game from GT, and thank bejeezus it's a good 'un. Unlike the terminally boring *Bunghole In One*, *Beavis & Butt-head Do U* is both playable and enjoyable, and the simple point-and-click adventure-style of play befits the nature of the television original. Written by Mike Judge himself, *Do U* is a hilarious enactment of a high school college visit – a place where, according to Beavis, the hapless duo will be able to "make it with naked college sluts". All the voices are right, as are the graphics (even the rough edges), and as you play through the game you feel as though you are in charge of your very own TV episode.

At the start of the tour Beavis and Butt-head are subjected to a seemingly endless speech from a boring college lecturer, and are not allowed to leave the hall until he's finished speaking. Escaping quickly is of paramount importance, because if you're trapped there for too long you become annoyed by the droning speech (when Butt-head says "Dammit, this guy is pissing me off. I wish he would just shut up or something," you can't help but empathise). The solution is pretty obscure, but fairly easy to suss out because the game is not particularly complex. Actually, it's idiot-proof – simply left-click to use/talk/exit, and right-click to examine. That's about it.

Once out of the lecture hall the game opens up. Butt-head gets a map ("Wow, a map. Let's use it to find something that doesn't suck.") and is told to collect eight 'sign offs' (proof that they've visited the entire college) before they are allowed to continue their preoccupation with 'naked college sluts' at a party that night. The ensuing chaos is truly hilarious, although the game itself is not particularly ambitious.

MTV may have stopped making the programmes, but Beavis and Butt-head still live on in computer games. And for that we should be truly thankful.

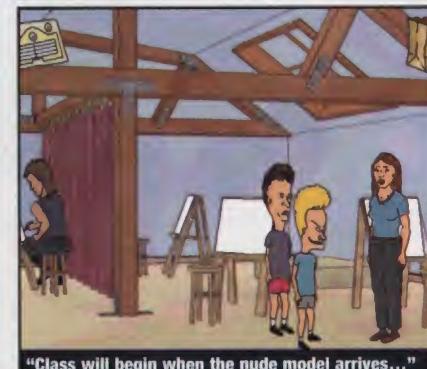
Paul Mallinson

PCZ VERDICT

79%



Kids these days: emptying the back of a garbage truck. Tsk.



"Class will begin when the nude model arrives..."



Beavis & Butt-head Do U: very rude, but lots of fun.

SANITARIUM

£34.99 • ASC Games • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** A P133 is a safer bet

This game features the most original plot of all time: bloke wakes up in a mental asylum, doesn't know how he got there, can't remember his name, his face is covered in bandages, and it's down to you to retrace his past and reveal his true identity. Standard fare, clearly, but underneath that predictable exterior lie a few surprises for would-be adventurers.

Max, the hero of the tale, visits many weird locations in his search for his inner self, and some of the places he comes across are genuinely disturbing. The village full of mutilated children, for example, plays host to some of the most warped character graphics you will come across in a PC game: a boy with two mouths, a girl who's been horribly disfigured by one of the main characters in the game, and a town full of children with various limbs missing (or added) are some of the delights of one of the early scenarios.

Ironically, the in-game dialogue is pretty tame given the horrific visual appearance of some of the characters, and

indeed Max (your alter ego) manages to sound both naive and stupid whatever the subject up for discussion. It is perhaps for this reason that *Sanitarium* is never truly offensive or shocking. The disturbing nature of the game's main theme and the 'tasteless' graphics are offset by the main character's naivety, and the general feeling that the scary folks in the game aren't for real, but instead are convenient place-holders whose main purpose is to help unfold the plot and point you in the direction of your next big quest.

Sanitarium is not an adventure game classic; moving the main character about can be a chore, and there are some throwaway arcade combat scenes that don't quite fit in with the rest of the game. However, it tells an intriguing tale, the graphics are very impressive, and decent point-and-click adventures are a bit thin on the ground these days. So this could be your last chance to get into a 'true' adventure in the conventional sense. Try it, you might like it.

Chris Anderson

PCZ VERDICT

79%



Eerie church, eerie game. Scared yet?



Detailed and moody graphics set the tone for this macabre adventure.

out of this world

SID MEIER'S
**ALPHA
CENTAURI**

THE FUTURE OF MANKIND

WINDOWS
98 & 95



alpha centauri

Sid Meier's 'Alpha Centauri' transports you onto an alien planet with truly mesmerising game play. Faced with host of challenges your aim is to create a community strong enough to conquer the planet or to achieve the 'Ascent to Transcendence'.



MEGASTORES



Just a bra? In this weather? Get yer thermals on!

SNOW WAVE AVALANCHE

★ £29.99 • UK Action • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM

ALSO REQUIRES 3D accelerator card **SUPPORTS** All major sound and 3D cards **WE SAY** Don't bother without a 3D card

A pretty unfortunate title, given the recent spate of tragedies. The name *Snow Wave Avalanche* is more likely to invoke morbid thoughts of death, suffocation, and the random cruelty of massive natural disasters than a hankering for high-speed snow-surfing hi-jinks. Which is a pity, because the game itself is actually pretty good.

Basically, this is almost identical to *1080 Snowboarding* on the Nintendo 64: you pick a character from the selection of despicable teenage loons on offer, then slide quickly down a slope while balancing on a bit of wood. There are loads of stunts



"I'm off. I can't stand that bloody soundtrack."



At least *Tank Racer's* physics engine is half decent.



Tank Racer is Grolier Interactive's last game for the PC.

to pull off, some excellent 3D-accelerated visuals, and it even supports force feedback. It may not be quite as polished as the Nintendo game, but if you've got a decent joystick it's about as much fun.

The other interesting thing about *Snow Wave Avalanche* is the bizarre soundtrack, which features some weird Scandinavian-sounding band who resemble a poor man's Green Day, and includes the lines 'I would sell my mum and kill my dog for a little suck / I would change my name, tattoo my face, for one little f**k', thereby rendering an otherwise harmless winter sports game potentially obscene. Ha! Not one for the kids, then.

Charlie Brooker

PCZ VERDICT

74%



A positive blast, yesterday.

THE GUARDIAN OF DARKNESS

★ £39.99 • Cryo Interactive Entertainment • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM

WE SAY As long as you have some form of 3D card you're fine with the minimum specs

The Guardian Of Darkness probably worked better at concept stage than it does in execution. The premise is sound: a mysterious society investigates strange and paranormal behaviour by using magical energy and old-fashioned detective work. The ten separate quests lend the game an episodic television series air: something like *The X-Files*, but without the high production values.

The adventures are varied enough, the spells are interesting and unique, and there's a nice Lovecraftian nature to it all. The problem is in the physical execution: the interface is clumsy, the graphics are too polygonal, and there's a distinctly 'rushed' feeling about it. Which is a shame, as it could have been a nice little game. In the hands of someone such as Looking Glass Studios or Valve, you feel that it could have been a whole lot better.

Paul Presley

PCZ VERDICT

65%

PCZ VERDICT

45%

★ £34.99 • Grolier Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards and 3D cards **WE SAY** Fine with this minimum spec

It's really no wonder that Grolier Interactive have packed their bags and are leaving the games industry. *Tank Racer* is the swansong title for the Oxford-based publisher, and to all intents and purposes sums up their contribution to gaming history. Basically, *Tank Racer* is a poor, throwaway game that looks a bit rushed and becomes boring after a few hours' play. Pretty much the same as every other game they've ever released, bar of course *V2000* (PCZ #69, 90%).

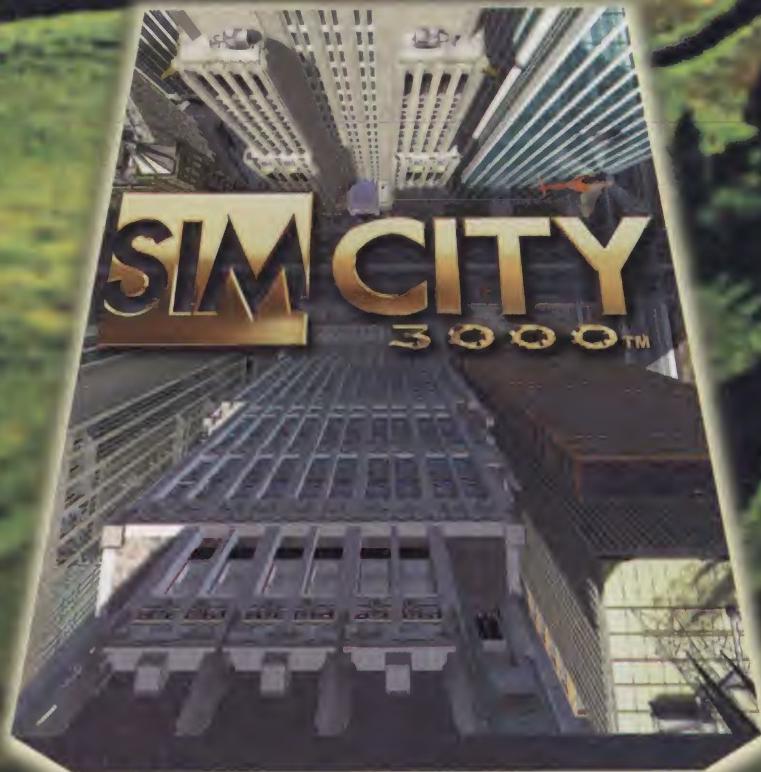
The basic premise is one of racing/combat, but like other racing/combat games (such as Ubi Soft's *SCARS* and Telstar's *Wrecking Crew*) there's little or no emphasis on one or the other; the fighting gets in the way of the racing, and vice versa.

Those of you on the lookout for a tank racing game could do far worse than *Tank Racer* (although you could buy *Wargasm* and pretend you're racing), but you'd have to be pretty simple to expect anything other than a bargain-basement console racing rip-off. The usual power-ups (homing missiles, shields, mines, turbos), themed courses (village, swamp, moon dome, theme park, riviera), cups (bronze, silver, gold) and vehicles (15 to choose from) have been included, none of which are what you would call original. In fact there's very little about the game to recommend. There isn't even a two-player split-screen mode (which there is in the PlayStation version), although six people can participate in a LAN game.

Unfortunately, nothing can rescue *Tank Racer* from obscurity – not even the smart logo on the box – and Grolier Interactive leave the games industry as unknown as when they first entered. It's a lesson to be learned.

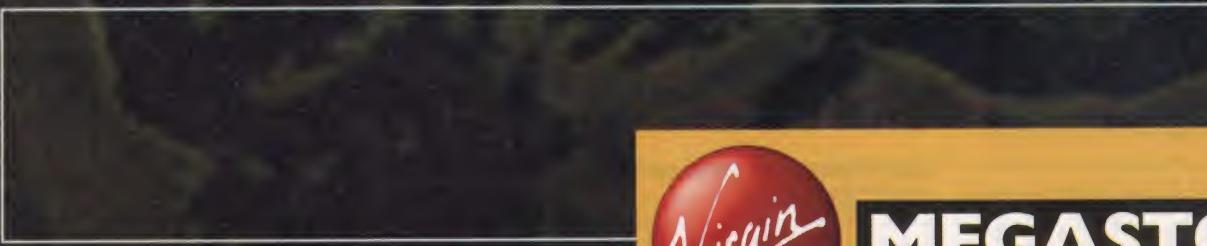
Paul Mallinson

putting you on the map



simcity 3000

Excitement is building for 'SimCity 3000', the addictive new game to expand the mind and capture the imagination. Packed with new elements including famous landmark buildings, full 3D rendering, rival cities and surround sound, this is a game of extraordinary depth.



MEGASTORES

GLOBAL DOMINATION

★ £29.99 • Psygnosis • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All 3D graphics cards **WE SAY** Processor shouldn't be a problem, but make sure your 3D card has a fair bit of memory onboard for maximum detail



Mother earth: the ultimate battlefield.

Reviewers everywhere are comparing this game to the film *Never Say Never Again*, but it's far more reminiscent of *The Seventh Seal*, dealing with the nature of life, death and gaming in a world gone mad with the ravages of armed conflict, with a bit of *Wargames* thrown in for good measure.

It's *Missile Command* played on a spinning 3D globe with the option to attack rather than just defend. Pointlessly amateurish FMV sequences tell the story of a secret global defence force fighting a ruthless megalomaniac, but each mission is simply a case of clicking the mouse button as fast as you can and hoping your missiles kill 'them' before 'theirs' kill you. In that sense it's the most accurate war simulation ever conceived. As a game, you simply don't need *Global Domination* in your life.

Paul Presley

PCZ VERDICT

30%



This looks reasonably interesting, but don't be fooled – it's not.



Recoil: too repetitive for its own good.

RECOIL

★ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3D sound, all half-decent 3D accelerators through DirectX 6.0 **WE SAY** Try at least a Pentium II system with 32Mb RAM and a good 3D card

Recoil is the latest in a long line of mindless 3D shooters in which you play a small tank equipped with all the usual artillery. Moving with the cursors and targeting with the mouse, you undertake a number of premeditated missions with linear objectives. Playing in either first- or third-person views, the manoeuvring seems awkward, and being caught on scenery or between walls is quite common. You also have to resist the urge to strafe – because you can't. Which is frustrating. The graphics are run-of-the-mill 3D accelerated fare. The sonics are quite good, but are spoiled somewhat by the generic Yank voice-overs.

Initially *Recoil* plays okay, although you realise soon enough that you're playing the same mission over and over again, with little variation to speak of. Even the multiplayer game gets repetitive after a few plays.

We might have suggested a look at *Recoil* if it was a budget title, but as a full-price game it lacks longevity and enjoyment.

Carlos Ruiz

PCZ VERDICT

55%



As if by magic, *StarCraft: Brood War* appeared.

STARCRAFT: BROOD WAR

★ £14.99 • Blizzard • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** You need a at least a P166

PCZONE RECOMMENDED After a long wait (not to mention some vocal dissent on the Internet), Blizzard have finally released their *StarCraft* add-on, *Brood War*. And it has definitely been worth the wait: three more campaigns, seven additional units and some sensible faction-balancing has turned *StarCraft* (PCZ #64, 88%) from an okay game into something akin to the mutt's nuts.

The new units are generally excellent, and make a

real difference to the way you play. The restoration abilities of the Terran Medic units prove highly valuable in combat, as does the corrosive venom of the ominously titled Devourer if you're playing as the Zerg. The three new campaigns follow on quite nicely from the previous game, and this time the FMV actually feels like part of the story rather than an afterthought. On top of this there are absolutely loads of new multiplayer maps to add to your collection. For any discerning *StarCraft* fan, *Brood War* is a must.

Daniel Emery

PCZ VERDICT

89%

ARCADE GREATEST HITS: THE ATARI COLLECTION II

★ £19.99 • GT Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** Life ain't what it used to be



"Blue wizard needs food." Ah, *Gauntlet*.

Insufferable trendy types will tend to look at a package like this and start warbling on about how games "were so much better in the old days". They'll then tell

you that you should buy these collections purely for the nostalgia factor alone. These people are, of course,

plonkers, and don't care about you like we do.

In truth, of the six games contained in this pack – *Paperboy*, *Gauntlet*, *Marble Madness*, *720°*, *Road Blasters* and *Vindicators* – only the first two were ever any good. The second pair were fair to middling at best, and the final duo, frankly, were as bad then as they are now. Age hasn't been particularly kind to any of them though, and even nostalgia isn't enough to give them a chance against today's behemoth PC games library.

All the games here are faithfully reproduced, certainly, and *Gauntlet* can still provide a bit of multiplayer fun, but there really isn't enough here to warrant your time or interest.

Paul Presley

PCZ VERDICT

47%

BUDGET ZONE

Do you buy the new Blondie album, or race down to your local games emporium and pick up a mid-price bargain? We know what we'd rather spend our pocket money on

★ MAN WITH AN EYE (AND AN EAR) FOR A BARGAIN Jeremy Wells



Flight Unlimited 2: choose from five classic civilian aircraft including the Cessna 172, Piper Arrow and Beachcroft Baron.



You can fly over 11,000 square miles of photo-realistic, satellite-mapped scenery rendered to four metres per pixel.

FLIGHT UNLIMITED 2

★ £12.99 • Eidos/Premier Collection • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P120 Memory 16Mb RAM

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

If you're used to the wide open spaces found in Microsoft's *Flight Simulator* series, you may find *Flight Unlimited 2* a little on the claustrophobic side. The terrain is certainly detailed enough, and they couldn't have picked a nicer city and surroundings, but not everybody will want to fly over and around San Francisco. That said, there are five different civilian aircraft to get to grips with, including the Havelin Beaver which enables you to practice taking off and landing on

water. Realistic weather conditions, turbulence, wind sheer, and up to 450 aircraft in the air at once introduce something of a challenge to those used to flying over a desolate landscape, and it's actually possible to navigate using roads, buildings and landmarks – which says a lot about the quality of the terrain technology. A lack of firepower means that it won't be to everyone's taste, but as a flight experience it's a propeller-head's must-buy.

PCZONE VERDICT

84%

ATOMIC BOMBERMAN

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM

PCZONE CLASSIC

It's almost ten years now since *Bomberman* first wowed 'em across the globe with its devilishly addictive yet simple gameplay.

This 'nineties' version was originally released a couple of years ago, and received rapturous acclaim mainly because apart from a 3D graphical update and a few tweaks, it was essentially the same game as the original. Okay played solo and awesome when played with friends, it remains one of the greatest multiplayer games ever devised, especially as there's now a hatful of new character animations and a vast repertoire of spiteful canned and custom taunts. At under five quid you'd have to be loopy not to own a copy. Buy it now.

PCZONE VERDICT

90%



The 'all-new' version of *Bomberman* boasts 60 stages and 12 different characters, and can be played by up to eight people on one PC or by ten via a modem.



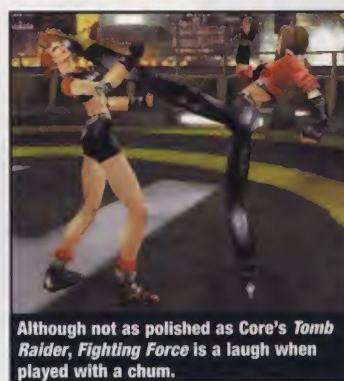
You have to think fast as you vie for deadly power-ups, race against the clock and attempt to blow your opponents to smithereens.



More of a 'hack and slash' 3D platform game than a traditional RPG, *Deathtrap Dungeon* is both accessible and huge.



Little-known fact #2: The 'live' model used to portray one of the game's characters featured on the cover of PC ZONE #56 is the *Big Breakfast's* Kelly Brook.



Although not as polished as Core's *Tomb Raider*, *Fighting Force* is a laugh when played with a chum.



Little-known fact #1: The 'live' model used to promote *Deathtrap Dungeon* is none other than the *Big Breakfast's* Kelly Brook.

DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

★ £12.99 • Eidos/Premier Collection •

Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P120 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 3D card recommended

Those familiar with Ian Livingstone's *Fighting Fantasy* range of books will no doubt assume that the premise for *Deathtrap Dungeon* involves running around a dungeon, slaying evil monsters, gathering loot and having a bit of a lark. And they'd be right.

The scale of the ten levels and the diversity of the 50+ characters you come up against is impressive, as is the range of weapons and spells at your disposal. However, a 'quirky' camera and the rather repetitive 'hack and slash' gameplay combine to prevent *Deathtrap Dungeon* from being elevated to the must-have category even at this mid-price. That said, there are much worse things you could spend £12.99 on.

PCZ VERDICT

79%

FIGHTING FORCE

★ £12.99 • Eidos/Premier Collection •

Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A 3D accelerator card is strongly recommended

From the people who gave us *Tomb Raider* comes the rather mediocre *Fighting Force*, a 3D, third-person beat 'em up in the mould of the old 2D arcade scrolling classics, such as *Double Dragon* and *Way Of The Exploding Fist*.

As a single-player game it's a pretty limited and repetitive affair, despite a wide range of baddies, levels and weaponry. Persuade a chum to join you, however, and the fun really starts, especially if you experiment with your character line-up and work together to trash everything in your path. There's none of the depth or cleverness of *Tomb Raider*, but as a two-player knockabout *Fighting Force* doesn't disappoint, especially at this mid-price.

PCZ VERDICT

69%

REVIEWS



Actua Golf 2 features a true 3D environment enabling complete freedom of movement around the course.



Like *Actua Soccer*, *Actua Golf* is good, but no better than the equivalent game from EA Sports' PGA series.

ACTUA GOLF 2

★ £12.99 • Eidos/Premier Collection •

Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P120 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 3D card recommended

Always the bridesmaid and never the bride, Gremlin's *Actua Golf* games were always going to have their work cut out going up against EA Sports' excellent PGA series (clocking up scores of over 90 per cent when reviewed in PC ZONE).

A true 3D 'go anywhere' environment, nicely detailed hi-res graphics, eight courses, and commentary from Peter Allis enables *Actua Golf 2* to compete in terms of features, but the control system lacks refinement, and overall the game is just not as polished as EA Sports' all-conquering PGAs.

If you're mad on golf games, at this price it certainly wouldn't be a crime to buy *Actua Golf 2*, but it's not wholly recommended either.

PCZ VERDICT

73%

ACTUA SOCCER 2

★ £12.99 • Eidos/Premier Collection • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A 3D accelerator card recommended

PCZONE RECOMMENDED As it's been superseded by Gremlin's own *Actua Soccer 3* and EA Sports' *World Cup 98* and *FIFA 99*, there seems little point in purchasing *Actua Soccer 2* if you already own one or more of those.

If you're looking for a cheap footie game, however, you could do a lot worse than *Actua Soccer 2*. Unlike the *FIFA* games, it's fast, furious and has the emphasis very much on 'pass and move' rather than ball skills and technique – much like the English game, in fact. The AI can frustrate you at times, especially that of the keepers, but all things considered *Actua Soccer 2* is a very playable and good-looking football game.

PCZ VERDICT

80%

Actua Soccer is fast and furious and makes a nice change from the dominant *FIFA* series.



Choose from 64 international teams to play in any one of 24 stadiums, and against or as Alan Shearer's All Star XI.

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FEEDBACK

Our first-person shoot 'em up Supertest in issue #74 provoked a huge response, so the whole of this month's Feedback is given to that subject.

Keith Pullin attempts to keep the debate on an even keel

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in PC ZONE over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

If, as you say, *Half-Life* is better than *Quake II*, then why did *Quake II* get a better score, and why is it ranked above *Half-Life* in your Top 100?"

ALAN WEEKS

HALF-LIFE

REVIEWED Issue 71, Xmas
SCORE 95%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Every few metres something amazing happens. The whole thing is a series of challenges that keeps on developing. It's brilliant."

What you think

★ "Don't believe the hype! The single-player game didn't get me any more excited than the other games you mentioned, and I was soon bored. Something exciting doesn't happen every few metres – more like every few hours. Fair enough, the AI is pretty good, and the game starts off very well, but it just doesn't hold your interest long enough. The deathmatch is annoying, incredibly unbalanced and camper-ific. Don't buy this game, save your money for something like *Daikatana*."

Anthony 'Sick of Half-Life'
Hughes

★ "How could you give *Half-Life* the same multiplayer score as *Quake II*? *Quake II* is the best multiplayer game on the PC, and to rank it with *Half-Life* is SAD!"

R Heeley

★ "Not even *Quake II* has me so hooked. The storyline is out of this

world and the graphics just blow me away. I wish to concur with most of the panel in saying that *Half-Life* walks all over *Quake II*."

James

★ "The AI and story all add up to make *Half-life* the best game ever, no argument. It kicks *Quake II*'s arse with its real world locations and immersive gameplay. Every games player should have *Half-Life*. No joke, it's that good."

Rob Kinder

★ "I thought 3D shooters were a load of crap until I played *Half-Life* – it's changed my life. I can't stay off my computer or stop thinking about it. It's one of the best games I've ever played. It is truly the king of 3D shooters."

Ginn

★ "While *Half-Life* is indeed a damn fine game, Valve appear to have taken a few shortcuts in order to get it finished on time. Have you noticed that your gunfire doesn't illuminate the area around you at all? Even crusty old *Doom* managed that. Another irritating point is the fact that the box shows screenshots of people with flashy looking shadows, when in reality no one has any shadows whatsoever, let alone good ones."

David Taylor



Mysteries Of The Sith: we underrated it, says Steven Moore.

JEDI KNIGHT / MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

REVIEWED Issue 55, October
SCORE 94%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Some of the level design is the best I've ever seen. I'm scared of heights, and was genuinely afraid of falling down some of those bottomless pits."

What you think

★ "What are you guys doing over there? Apart from *Half-Life*, *Mysteries Of The Sith* is the best shooter ever. How dare you give it 8/10 for level design? They're massive and well designed. And weapons 6/10? Where else can you find a lightsaber and Force powers?

"I feel you overlooked *Mysteries Of The Sith* for two reasons: firstly because it's old, and secondly because it's an add-on pack. *Sith* has always been better than *Quake II*, but no one would stand up and say it. You're all too caught up in the wonderful world of graphics to see that it's gameplay that really matters."

Steven Moore

Comment

I think we've got past the stage of being wowed by graphics alone, Steven. As for the game being overlooked – utter rubbish. If you look at the overall scores again you'll find

that all the marks relating to the graphical side of the game, such as atmosphere and level design, were actually quite high. But thanks for your comments, at least now Mallo knows he's not fighting a lone crusade.

QUAKE II

REVIEWED Issue 59, February
SCORE 97%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "The single-player game is boring, but with everything that's available from the Net it's great value for money if nothing else. ID make average games but exceptional 3D engines."

What you think

★ "Quake II never made you want to go back and play some more, *Quake* did. *Half-Life* beats *Quake II* hands down."

Kelvin White

★ "If, as you say, *Half-Life* is better than *Quake II*, then why did *Quake II* get a better score and why is it ranked above *Half-Life* in your Top 100?"

Alan Weeks

Comment

Good point. Each ZONE reviewer has their own opinion on games, and some are prone to awarding games higher scores than others. In fairness, we may have even underrated *Half-Life*. But there you go.



Half-Life: better than *Quake II*? It looks like this debate is going to run and run.



SiN: "a shambles," says Liz Wright, who thinks our objectivity was maybe swayed by "a pair of huge breasts".

SiN

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 91%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "SiN is f**king brilliant... It's a gorgeous-looking game and has lots of real-life buildings and stuff you can identify with that you don't normally get with this type of game."

What you think

★ "Did you play the release version? It sucked so hard the windows in my house imploded. The number of bugs was farcical – one bug even made sure that you couldn't complete it."

Ian Chisholm

★ "Why was SiN included in your Supertest? How did it ever get 91 per cent? Did you receive a different version to the rest of the UK? Life has many mysteries, and how this game ever made it onto the shelves is certainly one of them."

Brett Fletcher

★ "I've never understood what any of you see in SiN. The game is a shambles of the highest order and makes me want to vomit. Sure, it has some great ideas, like the helicopter at the start and the submarine section later on, but they are appallingly applied. The level design is certainly not worth the 8/10 you gave it, as most of the levels are basic mazes. Do you think sometimes you might get a bit carried away when a game happens to contain a pair of large breasts?"

Liz Wright

Comment

SiN: some people like it, some don't. Don't worry about it.

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD

REVIEWED Issue 68, October
SCORE 94%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "I played it for a week and I enjoyed it. If I'd have bought it I might still be playing it... You are a Klingon. Some people actually like that."

What you think

★ "A brilliant game and a brilliant idea. I hope Star Trek games of the future will enable us to take control of other popular alien races."

Don Green

★ "As a huge fan of the Star Trek series, I have to say I was slightly disappointed with the way Klingon: Honour Guard turned out. I agree with the greasy-looking reviewer who suggested that it was a missed opportunity not being allowed to kill Federation members – I'd love to spread the contents of Picard's bald head all over the bridge of the Enterprise."

Gary London

UNREAL

REVIEWED Issue 65, July
SCORE 93%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "The thing about Unreal is that it tried to incorporate an adventure plot into an action game. You really feel immersed, but you can't do the things you want to."

What you think

★ "I was shocked to see Unreal thrown into last place. Do you actually think Quake II has anywhere near as much

atmosphere as *Unreal*? I don't. I also bought *Half-Life* to see what all the fuss was about and to see how it compared. I played it and wasn't really amazed. The interaction with scientists and the AI was good, but atmosphere and level design? There's more atmosphere in a public toilet. *Unreal* excels in level design and creating a scary atmosphere, and the enemies are cool too. The way the story unfolds as you progress through the game is great. I agree that the weapons aren't as satisfying as the super shotgun from *Quake II*, but they are fun."

Ash Aaron

★ "Other than *Half-Life*, *Unreal* is the best first-person shoot 'em up out there, especially as it's only £20. The atmosphere is amazing – loads better than *Quake II*. *Jedi Knight* is too repetitive, and *SiN* contains too many bugs and shouldn't have even been sold. I can't wait until *Unreal Tournament* comes out."

Rory Kidd

★ "I really liked your article on the 3D shooters. I'm a great fan, and have five out of the eight games you covered. However, I don't agree with all your points. *Unreal*'s AI is far superior to that of *Quake II*, *SiN* and *Mysteries Of The Sith*, yet you gave it a measly 6/10. I would've given it seven or eight, or maybe even nine. Atmospherically I think *Unreal* takes the piss completely – much better than *Half-Life*, *SiN* and *MOTS*.

Veebs

★ "After reading you lot bitching on about how crap *Unreal* is, I thought I'd better set you straight. *Unreal* is a great game! There's no



Blood 2: Karl McAteer is disappointed by the lack of gore.

BLOOD 2: THE CHOSEN

REVIEWED Issue 72, January

SCORE 88%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "If you loved the first game, you'll love this. With more weapons than you'll find in most games and four characters to choose from, it's a single-player game worth playing more than once."

What you think

★ "Recommended? I don't think so. A worthy sequel to *Blood*? Never. Where's the shock factor, gore and gruesome images that gave it the 18 certificate? Hopefully *Blood 3* will be much better."

Karl McAteer

★ "Why did you include *Blood 2* at all in your Supertest? Not one person had anything particularly positive to say about it, and to me it looked as if it was there simply because it's new and seemed like a good idea at the time."

Carl Porter

Comment

Blood 2 was included because it's aimed at a more horror-oriented audience, and one thing we try to do in the Supertests is cover all angles if we can. Considering the gore/horror argument comes to the fore approximately twice a year anyway, we not only felt it was relevant to talk about the game, but also believed that at the time that it was the best 'horror/action' game out there. If we did the test again now, *Turok 2: Seeds Of Evil* would probably take its place.

What you think

★ "What the hell are you talking about? This game never gives you the impression that you're controlling a giant robot. I'd rather play *Doom* than pounce around in this pathetic metallic farce."

Perry Eyes

Dave Sutcliffe

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

REVIEWED Issue 71, January

SCORE 92%

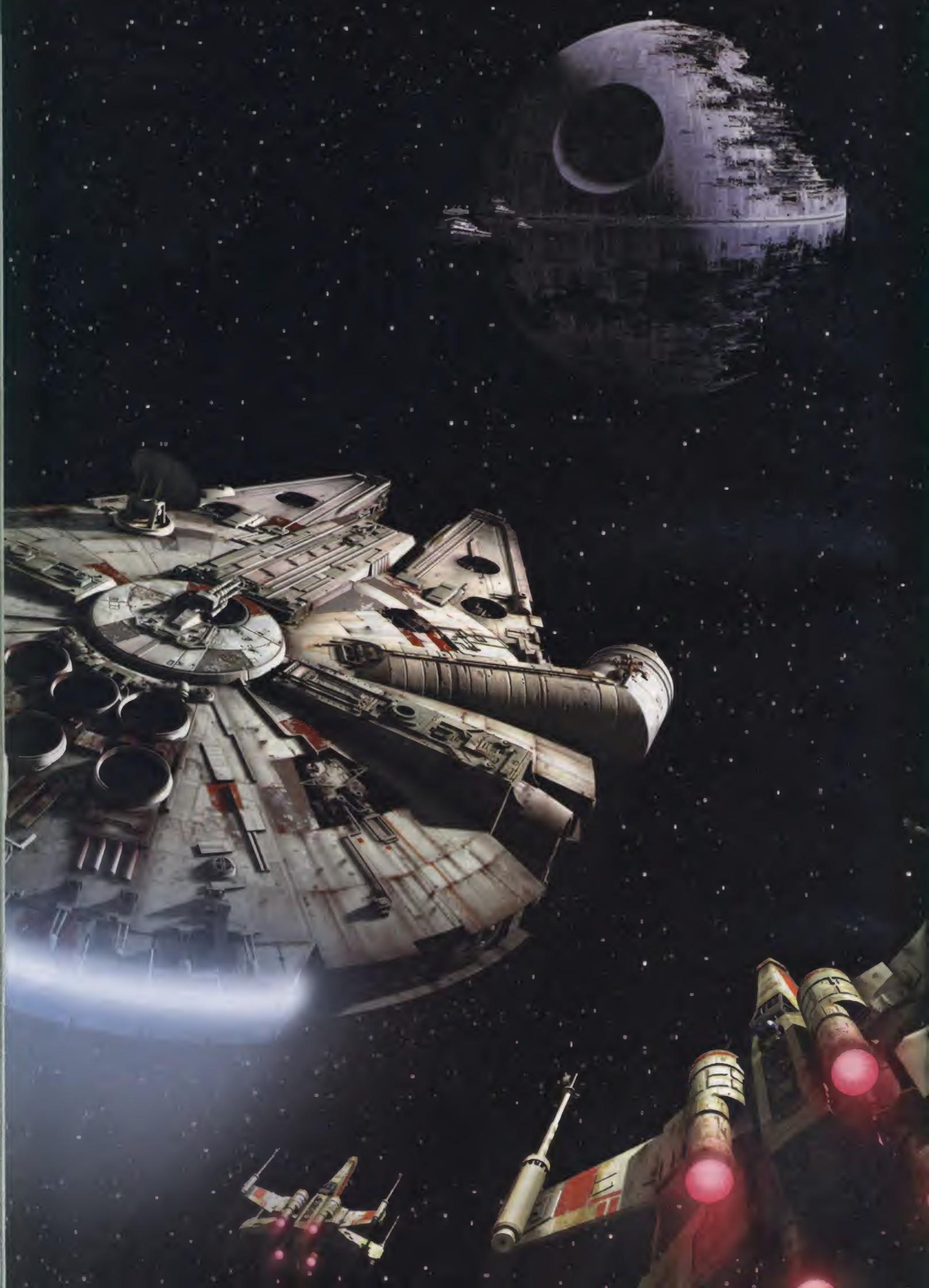
What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC

"When I finished *Shogo* I wanted a sequel right away. My heart was pumping all the way through the game. I should have died."

Shogo: Perry Eyes reckons you never feel that you're controlling a giant robot.





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PCZ SUPERTEST

SONY

ADVENTURE GAMES

It's time to drag the *PC ZONE* team around the table to discuss the greatest adventure games of all time. Not an easy task by any stretch of the imagination. Getting the beers in: *Paul Mallinson*



• L to R: Richie Shoemaker once met Terry Pratchett, has been playing adventure games for decades, and reviewed *Chewy - Escape From F5* • Chris Anderson has been playing and reviewing adventure games since he was born • Keith Pullin is a hardened adventure nut • Paul Mallinson has played and reviewed countless adventure games for a number of different games mags • Paul Presley's credits include reviews of *Alone In The Dark*, *Blade Runner*, *Mask Of Eternity* and *Discworld 2* for *PC ZONE*.

Alone In The Dark



Blade Runner



Day Of The Tentacle/Sam & Max



Grim Fandango





The adventure gaming genre is a strange beast. An adventure game's success relies not on mind-blowing graphical jiggery pokery or fancy 3D modelling, but on storyline, complexity and its ability to entertain. Technological demands come secondary to the writing, and therefore the best adventure games remain favourites with games players for years on end. Some of the games under discussion here are years old – many of you will have heard of them already, some of you won't, but it just goes to show how games of this type are able to stand the test of time.

That said, the dividing line between adventure and action has blurred recently, and a number of *Tomb Raider*-style action-adventures have appeared – using advanced 3D graphic engines – creating a rift between adventure enthusiasts as they argue among themselves about what actually constitutes a 'proper' adventure game. Well, at least it makes a change from the now boring 'is the adventure game dead?' debate.

Choosing a shortlist for this Supertest wasn't easy either. As you would imagine, there have been countless 'traditional' adventures released over the years (even MicroProse went

through an adventure phase in the early '90s), and you may be surprised to find that one of your favourite games is not being considered 'up there' alongside the select few being debated here. We regard our choices as a balanced, fair and good representation of the history of the adventure game (and not just a listing of the LucasArts back catalogue). If you don't agree, then write in and let us know.

Once again the blood pressure rose as the *PC ZONE* team argued it out. Opinions were voiced and defended with fervour as the search for the best adventure game of all time began in an orgy of beer and pizza...

THE ALONE IN THE DARK TRILOGY

Keith: The first one was excellent, the second was appalling, but the third was the best of them all. The first was quite ground-breaking in a way. It employed new techniques to present the way the adventure unfolded – like the backgrounds and the polygonal characters. The second game was just a maze – too much running around for my liking. The third one combined the two extremely well. →



Alone In The Dark: the adventure game that spawned a sub-genre.

AITD 2: expanded the theme and improved the graphics.

AITD 3: Edward Carnby's swansong.

THE ALONE IN THE DARK TRILOGY

In 1992, the first *Alone In The Dark* redefined the adventure genre with its mix of 3D graphics and chilling storytelling. Part two continued the trend, with the lead character battling the forces of evil in a ghost/pirate setting. For episode three he returned in a Wild West tale.

SCORE	<i>AITD 1</i> PCZ #4, 90% <i>AITD 2</i> PCZ #11, 97% <i>AITD 3</i> PCZ #23, 95%
DEVELOPER	I-Motion
PUBLISHER	Infogrames
PRICE	£29.99 (compilation pack)

Little Big Adventure 2



Mask Of Eternity



Monkey Island Trilogy



Discworld 2



It had excellent puzzles, improved graphics and a superb plotline. **Mallo:** I remember the second one being a bit too hard – like where you come out of the maze and go up to the house and you keep getting gunned down. Dying so regularly made it tiresome.

Prezzer: The third one was set in the Wild West, wasn't it?

Mallo: Yeah, the first was the haunted house, and the second was pirates.

Prezzer: Which is the one with the little girl?

Mallo: That was the second one – the pirate adventure.

Richie: Aren't you thinking of *The City Of Lost Children*?

Mallo: No, in the second *Alone In The Dark* game there's a girl who looks very similar to Miette (the girl from *The City Of Lost Children*), and you could actually play as her at one point. You could take control of her to help the trapped Carnby. The way it was done was very clever. I thought the first episode was brilliant. I played it through four or five times and enjoyed it every time. I'd still play it now, I think.

Chris: I don't know if I would. At the time it was brilliant – very atmospheric – but it started a trend that has since been surpassed. There are many other games doing the same kind of thing that are better to play. That's what puts me off going back to it, to be honest.

Mallo: In the first game, the way the story unfolds is at times very chilling. Having said that, anyone who read the shoot 'em up Supertest (PCZ #74) will know that almost anything scares me.

Prezzer: As a trilogy, the *Alone In The Dark* series is a good pack, but no game's worth 30 quid.

Mallo: But this is a compilation.

Prezzer: They are very good games – the second's a bit dodgy, mind you.

Keith: The trilogy is a superb deal – although you'll have to look hard for it cos it's been deleted.

Chris: They are a valuable lesson in the history of the adventure game, and worth hunting down.

Mallo: Indeed. Right, who wants what to drink?

BLADE RUNNER

Prezzer: Don't get me started... *Blade Runner* was a wasted opportunity and a victim of false promises.

Chris: I thought it was excellent. It's one of the few adventure games with genuine replay value. Go on the Internet and you can see testimonials from lots of people saying: "I liked it so much

I went back and played it a completely different way." The game branches out depending on the choices you make early on.

Prezzer: Not to any great extreme, though.

Chris: It's different enough for die-hard fans to want to go back and do it again. You can't argue that it's not a good adventure in its own right – it's got all the elements you'd expect from a game of this sort, and more. I thought you were very harsh on it in your review way back in issue 58. Also, it sold extremely well.

Prezzer: Sales are no indication of quality. Chris, have you been in the adventure newsgroups recently? The *Blade Runner* camp in the adventure newsgroups is split almost 80-20 against. Most people seem to think it doesn't live up to its promises. Before I wrote my review, Westwood were promising this, they were promising that... a conversation system that had emotions; characters that had independent lives. None of that happened.

Mallo: So you were disappointed?

Prezzer: Very! On top of that it's too 'choppy,' and the graphics in

BLADE RUNNER

Released in 1997, the point-and-click adventure *Blade Runner* borrowed heavily from the film on which it was based, and took Deckard's search-and-destroy mission for killer androids a step further by introducing complex puzzles and multiple plotlines. Despite misgivings about the game's graphical content, it proved a big hit.

Score	PCZ #58, 88%
Developer	Westwood Studios
Publisher	Virgin
Price	£29.99

The ZONE team almost come to blows over *Blade Runner*.

learning curve is well-balanced. Overall I'd have to say it's a very good adventure game.

Mallo: What about the people

who aren't particularly big fans of the film?

Chris: We made that point in the review. Fans of *Blade Runner* the film will love it.

Prezzer: Excuse me, I'm a *Blade*

put me off and I didn't

actually play it in any great depth.

Chris: I'm really glad I didn't let that hold me back, because I ended up playing a great game, and that's what I want to say to anyone who's thinking about playing it.

Richie: In the grand scheme of things, against the back catalogue of other adventure games, it came along at a time when people weren't really into adventure games and there wasn't much competition around. Adventure games weren't that great at the time, but it did seem to hold its own very well.

Prezzer: This sparks off an entirely new topic of discussion about what constitutes an adventure game. At that time it was so open to interpretation that no one really knew the answer. Going back to the point about the film licence, we've got to ask ourselves whether it's a good interpretation of the film or...

Chris: What's the point in that? You've seen the film, you don't want to know what happens...

Prezzer: Will you let me finish! Right, take the *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* adventure.

That's a game based on a film – as *Blade Runner* is – that managed to do it in a way that kept you engaged, challenged and entertained. It took the basic elements of the storyline, characters and such, and threw an entirely new game around it – a well-designed game at that.

Blade Runner didn't do that. It kept throwing you exactly what you expected it to, like, "Ooh look, here's the photograph machine. Here's a replicant... Let's wheel on the suspects just for the fans..." Pointless.

Chris: That is so harsh it's unbelievable! That is stupidly harsh.

Prezzer: At no time did I really feel as though I was part of the *Blade Runner* world.

Chris: I don't know how you can say that. It had so many elements from the *Blade Runner* world. What did you want? Did you want to be magically transported into the movie or something?

Prezzer: Yes!

Chris: Well it isn't gonna happen. I'm sorry.

Prezzer: It happened with *Indiana Jones*.

Chris: It did not happen with *Indiana Jones*.

Prezzer: It did.

Chris: Well clearly it happened with you, but we seem to have different agendas. The point is, no one's saying that *Blade Runner* is a classic. We didn't award it a PC ZONE Classic when we reviewed it. What we're saying is that it's a good adventure game. I'm saying that, Keith's saying that, and Mallo and Richie to some extent...

Prezzer: If you gave me 35 quid and said buy an adventure game with that, I wouldn't buy *Blade Runner*. It's as simple as that.

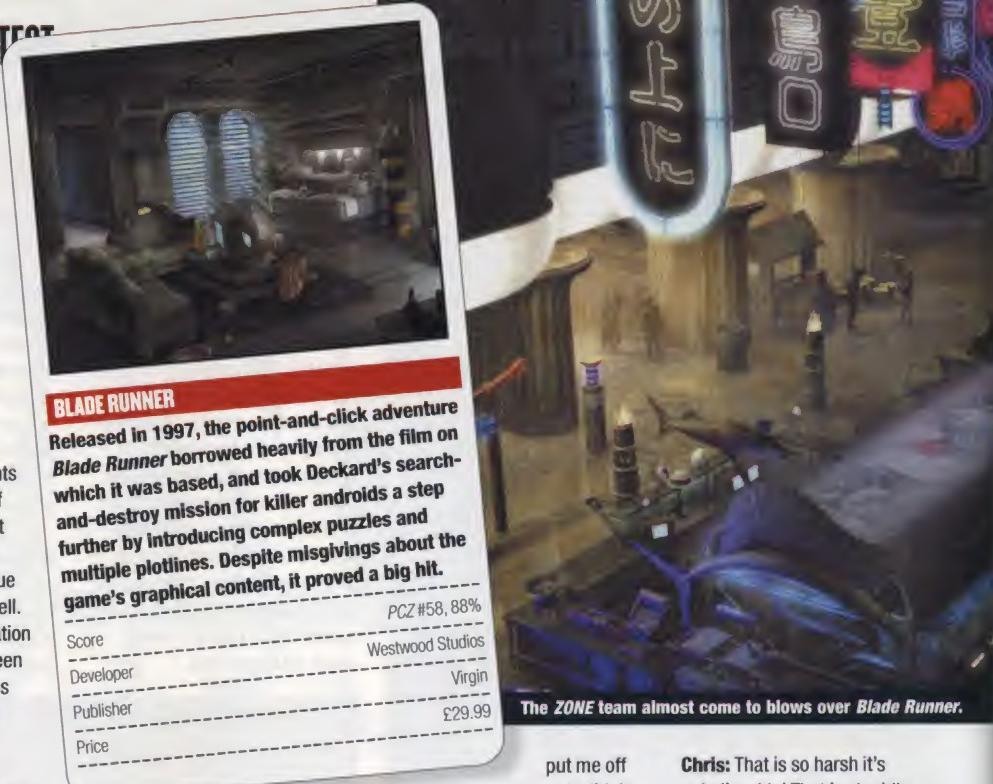
Mallo: Mine's a Beck's.

DAY OF THE TENTACLE / SAM & MAX HIT THE ROAD

Chris: *Day Of The Tentacle* – brilliant game. People need to be warned that it's very difficult – it's not for first-timers. I think *Sam & Max* is incredibly overrated, personally, because a) it's not funny, and b) the plot isn't strong enough to keep you enthralled.

Mallo: Were you in a bad mood at the time? It's such a great game, and very funny.

Chris: At the time I thought: "I've got a LucasArts game to play – no



“The first episode was just so brilliant. I'd still play it now”

MALLO ON THE
ALONE IN THE DARK TRILOGY

certain places were just awful – especially the pixelation when the characters moved into the foreground.

Mallo: Westwood are better known for their gameplay than for graphics though, aren't they?

Chris: Who cares about the graphics?

Prezzer: I wanted to enjoy playing the game, which to some extent includes the graphics.

Chris: So what you're saying is that we can take *Monkey Island* 1 and 2 and throw them out the window?

Prezzer: No, I was talking about the gameplay.

Keith: I've played *Blade Runner* and I think it's a good game. The number of letters I receive for Dear Keith seems to indicate that a lot of people out there agree. It manages to retain much of the atmosphere generated by the film, the puzzles are good, and the

one is happier than me." After playing *Monkey Island 1* and *2*, my expectations were stupidly high for *Sam & Max* because I thought it was a LucasArts comedy adventure. And I was just sooo disappointed. There were a couple of one-liners that were quite funny, but the rest was just shit. And the graphics are crap!

Mallo: I disagree. I think the graphics are beautifully drawn.

Chris: I gave up in despair and went on to play something else.

Richie: *Day Of The Tentacle* and *Sam & Max* are the two adventures I've spent the most time on. I'm not very good at adventures, I get stuck very easily and I'm always cheating, but...

Mallo: Did you complete *Sam & Max*?

Richie: Yeah.

Mallo: Without cheating?

Richie: No. I've never completed an adventure without cheating. (*Gasp* and laughs from all around.)

Keith: I didn't think *Sam & Max* was particularly funny. It was very hard...

Mallo: If anything, some of the puzzles were a bit obscure.

Keith: Extremely obscure!

Mallo: But you were helped along the way. The SCUMM interface (*Story Creation Utility for Maniac Mansion*, LucasArts' 'patented' adventure front end – *Jargon Ed*) was very easy to use and the story gave all the right clues. Didn't it?

Keith: The thing I liked about *Sam & Max* more than anything was the graphics. It was very enjoyable to watch – in fact I once sat up all night watching someone else play it.

Prezzer: That's probably why they turned it into an animated cartoon.

Mallo: Then cancelled it after a few episodes.

Prezzer: I didn't spend too much time with *Sam & Max*, but I sort of agree with Chris on this one. The game did have a very good script, which I liked a lot and was very funny, but the puzzles themselves were too outlandish.

Mallo: Not only was *Sam & Max* beautifully drawn, but also the humour was very dry – funny, coming from a US developer.

Yeah, it looks a bit dated now, but we're talking 320x240, 256-colour VGA graphics. There was one particular character who made me laugh out loud – the guy in the revolving restaurant wearing the turban who would bend metal objects for you. He'd swear and it would be bleeped out. It was very funny.

Richie: It was turban-tastic!

Everyone: Ho, ho, ho!

Mallo: *Day Of The Tentacle* was one of the first PC games I ever played in any depth. The intro was absolutely stunning, the characterisation was brilliant and the animation was fantastic. The puzzles were very difficult, but the way they used paradox and



Turban-tastic: LucasArts' *Grim Fandango*.



GRIM FANDANGO

Some consider LucasArts' latest adventure to be the best they've ever made, although that opinion is arguable. The quest of Manny and his numerous companions is both hilarious and engaging as they fight their way through an undercover operation cleverly styled to fit in with a Mexican 'Day of the Dead' theme.

Score

PCZ #71, 90%

Developer

LucasArts

Publisher

LucasArts

Price

£39.99

time, and the way they used time travel to solve the puzzles, was nothing short of genius.

Chris: It was a very clever game.

Mallo: I still think it's relevant now.

Chris: I would still recommend *Day Of The Tentacle* even now. It's a brilliant game. All these strange

characters who're completely different from each other, that was the best thing about it.

I don't want the subject to go off *Sam & Max* just yet though.

The humour came across as being very American, which does nothing for me, whereas *Monkey Island 1* and *2* were really Python-

Richie: Mallo wants a Barbie doll...

Mallo: No, no... Okay, forget the dressing up bits. Do you remember the 'whack-a-rat' machine, where you have the rodents popping up and you have to hit them on the head with a mallet to win a useful prize? That sort of thing was so well done. *Sam & Max* was an adventure game that had these arcade-style elements in an attempt to broaden the game's appeal.

Chris: The fact that we've got split opinions on *Sam & Max*, and that everyone agrees on how we stand on *Day Of The Tentacle*, is enough to heartily recommend it.

Mallo: I agree. More beers?

• If you gave me 35 quid and said buy an adventure game, I wouldn't buy *Blade Runner* •

PREZZER IS UNIMPRESSED



Sam & Max Hit The Road: full of crazy little set pieces.



Day Of The Tentacle: the cleverest puzzles of all time?



DAY OF THE TENTACLE / SAM & MAX HIT THE ROAD
Hilarious in content and ground-breaking by design, both now bargain-priced games are rolled into one for the purpose of this Supertest. *DOTT* is the story of four time-travelling friends' attempts to thwart a mutant tentacle from taking over the world. *S&M* is a cartoon strip-style 'freelance police' duo adventure.

DOTT PCZ #07, 87% *S&M* PCZ #16, 93%

LucasArts

Developer

Virgin White Label

Publisher

£9.99 (each)

Price

esque and the humour seemed very British. That's what was being said at the time: you won't believe that this was written by Americans, because it's so funny.

Mallo: You've just got to look at things like *South Park* at the moment. There are people out there who appreciate the subtle humour, and the slapstick elements as well, and that was written by Americans. I thought *Sam & Max* certainly had a hint of that British-style laconic, sarcastic humour.

Chris: I think that's what put me off – I don't do slapstick.

Mallo: What about all the little extras in the game? There was a colouring book, and a dress-me-up doll...

GRIM FANDANGO

Keith: I love *Grim Fandango*. The 'film noir' graphical style was revolutionary, although there are still big problems with the interface – that's something LucasArts still need to work on. The fact that you've got to reverse out of doors – reverse out of rooms sometimes – is appalling. It's almost a bug in the program. The designers should have worked on it a little bit longer.

Aside from that, everything about it – the plot, the story – is brilliant.

Mallo: What about the way that the character looks at objects to indicate that they're interactive, rather than having an intelligent cursor?

Chris: It slows the pace down.

Prezzer: Exactly. What I really miss is being able to move the mouse on the screen to highlight





'hot spots,' because having to move the character around yourself breaks up the atmosphere. It would have worked so much better if after clicking on an object with the cursor the character then walked over to it.

Mallo: What about the adventures that didn't have a 'hot' cursor, and did require you to search every millimetre of the screen for items to interact with?

Prezzer: Some developers did take it to the extreme.

Chris: There were two terrible things about adventure games then. That was one of them, the other was dying.

Prezzer: If you died through a mistake of your own making, then that was okay.

Richie: *Grim Fandango* was a big change for the adventure game, but as a starting point for the 'rebirth of the genre' it was very important and very good. I don't think it disappoints anyone, really.

Keith: Characters are very important in an adventure game – you need interesting personalities, which *Grim Fandango* has.

Mallo: Something that no one has mentioned is how important voice acting is, and *Grim Fandango* has some of the best we've heard. It's brilliant – the people who did the voices managed to inject real feeling and real character. It's worthy of a movie.

Prezzer: As you said, great acting. But I'm not going to say 'good script', because the storyline drags in so many

places. You go through the motions and think: "I'm only playing this because I've got a basic interest in seeing this game." The puzzles were half-hearted to say the least.

Keith: What's a half-hearted puzzle?

Prezzer: I like puzzles that make me think and make me appreciate solving them. I know there's an objective that I've got to achieve, and I've got certain elements to do it with. It's a case of 'I had to think about that' and 'I worked it out using my brain', rather than just trying this object and that object with this object.

Chris: You can't say that. That's what adventure games are all about. Since the beginning of time!

Richie: There's no other way of doing it.

Prezzer: *Grim Fandango* is not the all-time classic that everyone says it is. It's nice looking and, as you say, well acted, but the storyline drags in places and it left me bored. The puzzles weren't the best I've ever seen either; a lot of the time it was just a case of using one object or another until something worked.

Chris: Don't you think a lot of people like the fact that the puzzles aren't *that* difficult?

Prezzer: I have never subscribed to the theory that adventure games should have easy puzzles. If a puzzle is too hard, as long as the solution is not too obscure then good – that's what adventure games are about.

Mallo: Hold on. *Grim Fandango* is more like a film than anything else. It's got movie-like presentation and you're basically watching a story unfold. That's the most important thing. You're going to be thrown puzzles from time to time just to keep you thinking and keep you moving around. The puzzles are secondary.

Prezzer: But the storyline wasn't as strong as it could have been. It was kind of dull in places – it dragged...

Mallo: Maybe for you.

Prezzer: ...And I felt like I was plodding through just for the sake of it.

Mallo: What about beginners? People who want to play an adventure game for the first time who might find *Grim Fandango* perfect for their means? You've played so many adventure games you can spot the easy puzzles a mile off. But not everyone can, and they might find *Grim Fandango*, or a game like it, ideal.

Prezzer: Well I can't comment on that because I'm not a beginner. It's tricky for me to say what constitutes a beginner's puzzle, because I don't know what a beginner needs.

Mallo: I'm not saying it's *just* for the beginner. It's like reading a book – anyone able can participate.

Prezzer: If that's all I want I may as well read a book.

Mallo: Well okay, that's not what you want from adventure games, but some people do.

Keith: I've got a friend who's got

a little baby, and they all sit down and play *Grim Fandango*. It's the universal appeal of the game.

Mallo: And his baby's not even one yet.

Prezzer: Oh god, it's a family game now!

Mallo: Prez, shut up. It's your turn to go to the bar.

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2

Mallo: I didn't like *Little Big Adventure 2* at all. I thought it was really twee. I played it for about four or five hours one night, got reasonably far, and then never touched it again because there



Mask Of Eternity: proof that action adventures do work.



“**Aside from the interface, everything about it – the plot, the story – is brilliant”**

KEITH IS (MOSTLY) FULL OF PRAISE FOR GRIM FANDANGO

was something about it that made me feel sick inside. I don't quite know what it was. There was this kind of naive continental stupidity about the game which put me off. I prefer more gritty adventures, more realistic adventures – with swearing.

Richie: It's not a classic adventure as such, but you can see that it's somewhere in between. There are a lot of similarities between *Grim Fandango* and this, and it takes in lots of other elements as well.

There's a driving part in it, for Christ's sake! It uses a lot of other games as its starting point, but in a different and stylish way.

Mallo: Graphically it's fantastic. Yeah, it's definitely a step up from the original *Little Big Adventure*.

Richie: I prefer the characters in *Little Big Adventure 2*.

Mallo: The dialogue is appalling.

Richie: Yeah, it was a bit 'grey'.

Chris: I thought *LBA 2* was brilliant. There's something about both of them that you don't get from other adventure games. It's the atmosphere. The dialogue in them isn't particularly entertaining, but it gives you perfect advice and points you in the right direction towards the next part of the game.

Mallo: Don't you think it's too action-oriented?

Chris: The brilliant thing about the action elements is that they're generally hilarious, and you get into all kinds of amusing

situations when you're fighting people. The animation's not realistic at all, which makes it all the more hilarious.

Richie: I didn't exactly split my sides...

Mallo: Did anyone laugh out loud when they played it?

Chris: I did.

Mallo: So you think *Sam & Max* wasn't funny, but this is?!

Chris: Well, in *Sam & Max* I wasn't able to bash my girlfriend around the head with a large bat...

Richie: And you think that's funny?

Keith: I didn't play *LBA 2* much, but I didn't think it was a particularly good adventure game. It didn't appeal to my brain, so I won't be playing it again.

Prezzer: I didn't like the look of it either – it looked more like an action game than an adventure.

Chris: What do you define as an action game? There are points you come across in any game where you have to get into combat. The fact that you have the character's actions under your control – sneaking around or running, for example – is a brilliant idea, and you rarely get that sort of thing in adventure games. Ultimately though, you spend most of your time trying to stay out of fights as opposed to getting into them.

There's no way you can call *Little Big Adventure 2* an action game, even if there is a very small action element. An action game is something like *Resident Evil 2*. Well it is to me, anyway.

Mallo: I disagree. But right now I've really got to go to the toilet, so it'll have to wait. And someone get a round in while I'm gone...



LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2

This weird, pseudo 3D adventure won the hearts of adventure gamers when first released in 1997. Lead character Twinsen explores his homeland of Twinsun in an attempt to uncover a mysterious change in the weather. The game also introduces light action elements and combat in a way that had not been seen before.

Score	PCZ #54, 93%
Developer	Adeline
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Price	£34.99



LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2: those crazy French.

**KING'S QUEST: MASK OF ETERNITY**

The series grew 3D wings for its eighth outing, disappointing some but delighting others who believed it to be the right direction for the genre to go in. The third-person view and floating camera take some getting used to, but it's a game with a worthy story – especially if you prefer adventures with a bit of hack and slash.

Score	PCZ #71, 89%
Developer	Sierra On Line
Publisher	Sierra On Line
Price	£34.99

MASK OF ETERNITY

Keith: This isn't an adventure game in the slightest, it's a *Tomb Raider III*-style action game. There's no adventure element in it at all.

Prezzer: I can see what you're saying, but the problem is that all 3D adventure games are going to be seen that way, which is of course wrong. Most modern adventure games seem to be *Tomb Raider III* variants. That's the way game designers are making games now.

Mallo: I've got to agree with Prez on this one. That's the way adventuring is going – developers starting to use 3D technology to portray the action, whether you retain full control of your character or not. Pre-rendered cut-scenes should soon become a thing of the past, and everything in a game will be generated in real time through a 3D card. All the stuff coming up is going to go down that route. Look at *Zelda* on the Nintendo 64. Adventure games can only benefit, surely?

Keith: But if it's going to be done that way it needs to be done much better than it was in *Mask Of Eternity*. I think the lack of emphasis given to the interface is significant. There's a weird manual camera that scans around the room, making the whole thing feel 'fumbly' and 'disjointed'. There's absolutely no flow to it.

Prezzer: I disagree about the interface. When I first played

Mask Of Eternity the interface did feel weird, but after spending more time with it I eventually found it very natural to use.

But I totally agree with you on the action side of it. There was way too much combat – far too gratuitous. Unfortunately though, you have to have something going on all the time – according to the people who made it, that is.

Keith: If adventures are going to go down this '3D' route, then the developers are going to have to make sure that the physics of the game are right. *Mask Of Eternity*'s physics feel completely wrong – when the main character jumps

he seems to travel far enough to break the bloody world triple jump record! He just flies off into the distance. Mad.

Chris: I was disappointed with it for different reasons. I've played every *King's Quest*, from I to VII, and *Mask Of Eternity* is not a revertible image of the game. I was devastated, because I'd spoken to the people at Sierra in the States and they told me that it would be an

"No one is going to look back and say this started the whole thing off, because it didn't"

RICHIE ON MASK OF ETERNITY INFLUENCE ON THE GENRE

adventure game. Somewhere along the line they saw *Tomb Raider III* and other games like that and thought "Right, we want to make this a 3D action game."

Initially I think the intention was a compromise between the two, but in the end they probably found it difficult to incorporate the adventure elements into the game as much as they would have liked. **Mallo:** I think *Redguard* (PCZ #75, 89%) is extremely similar to this. I'd say both are adventure games, definitely, although there's very little to choose between them.

Prezzer: I actually like *Mask Of Eternity*. Yes, there is far too much action, but it still does a pretty good job of creating an atmosphere and telling a story. Even when I was playing it, even though I knew this was a new way of presenting things, I felt involved with the story. I'm not too sure about that jumping problem though, Keith. It seemed like everyday normal jumping to me.

Chris: I think you can take things a bit too far. Realistically, to have perfect physics in a game of this sort is not what people are looking for. It is a good game, but it wasn't the next logical step in the *King's Quest* series.

Prezzer: It was the first of this

new batch of 3D games, so it was always going to suffer as a result. Whatever comes along afterwards is going to be much better and will capitalise on everything they've achieved.

Richie: But no one is going to look back at *Mask Of Eternity* fondly and say that it started the whole thing off, because it didn't.

Mallo: Well just three or four months after the review it's been forgotten about.

Chris: You've got to admire Sierra for trying to create a 3D world of that size. Do you know how big Daventry is? You felt like you were in a proper world. They had to create this massive environment with lots of really big, open spaces. LucasArts didn't attempt to do anything even vaguely ambitious with the world that you could explore in *Grim Fandango*, but *Eternity* was a much more ambitious project.

Prezzer: Sierra created a 'proper' role-playing game; LucasArts tell stories. LucasArts always start with a story; Sierra start with a world.

Mallo: I don't think there's any room in this world for an adventure with a main town called Daventry.

Prezzer: Actually, Daventry exists in England.

Mallo: Pizza, anyone?

MONKEY ISLAND TRILOGY

Mallo: You can get all three *Monkey Island* games in one pack for £29.99. It's called *A Bunch Of Bananas*. Which is cool.

Chris: *Monkey Island 1* and 2 had

absolutely hilarious moments that I will never, ever, ever forget. It's really funny, a brilliant story, and a brilliant game. How many amazing characters do you want me to reel off? Like the used boat salesman. It's just fantastic.

Prezzer: Ron Gilbert is a creative god (*Ron wrote the original Monkey Island games – Ed.*)

Chris: Then I played *Monkey 3*, which was shit. I'm not saying it wasn't very good – I'm saying that it sucked. I've never played such a dull adventure game in my whole life. It wasn't made by the same people.

Mallo: So how did we get it so wrong when we reviewed it?

Chris: It wasn't just us, it was everyone. I think that because the *Monkey Island* games commanded such respect in the games industry, reviewers were afraid to slag it off. And I really do believe that. If I'd written that review I would have given it 60 per cent – max. It's nothing special, and it's not funny at all. And it really pissed me off that they tried to use some of the elements from *Monkey Island 1* and 2, because they did it really, really badly.

Prezzer: It was the typical sequel problem: "We've got some great pre-built elements, let's just wheel them out again."

Chris: It's not very often that I'm offended by a virtual reality computer game, but I definitely was by this one.

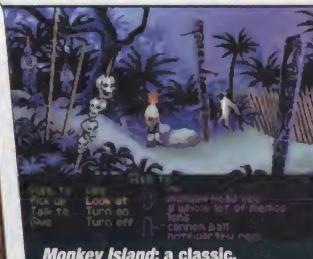
Mallo: Would that put you off buying the triple pack?

Chris: I would say that if you

**THE MONKEY ISLAND TRILOGY**

Guybrush Threepwood has reduced PC games players to tears of laughter on numerous occasions since 1990. The *Secret Of Monkey Island* was followed up with *LeChuck's Revenge* in 1991, and the final part of the trilogy (*Curse Of Monkey Island*) in 1997. Still considered by many to be the funniest games of all time.

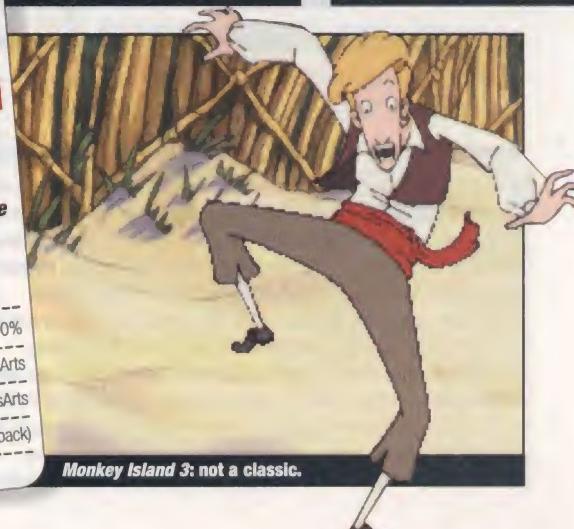
Score	PCZ #74, 90%
Developer	LucasArts
Publisher	LucasArts
Price	£29.99 (compilation pack)



Monkey Island: a classic.



Monkey Island 2: another classic.



Monkey Island 3: not a classic.



"Well, we'll get a few *Spitting Image* and *Red Dwarf* actors in to do all these quaint *Monty Python*-style voices, and it's going to go down great in Germany and America." We all know that Germans are easily pleased and that Americans love silly voices, but over here I think you need something a little more subtle. The games themselves had extremely difficult puzzles as well – too hard and too obscure.

Chris: They were incredibly difficult, and that put people off. But the dialogue was generally really funny. It depends on what you like. I liked it.

Mallo: Did anyone here complete *Discworld 2*?

Chris: Not the second one. I almost completed the first one. I don't think the second game is as good as the first.

Mallo: Why did we rate it as highly as we did, then?

Chris: It's good... no, it's a great game. I don't think people will have the same problems you have with the voice-overs. They're not that annoying. It's a personal thing, and that came through in the last Supertest we did with shoot 'em ups (*PCZ* #74). Some people found *Sin's* voice acting really offensive. I didn't, I just ignored it and carried on playing the game. Non-Eric Idle fans don't play *Discworld*.

Prezzer: Eric Idle was always the least talented of the *Monty Python* group.

Mallo: It's not a *Monty Python* issue, it's an issue of British voice acting versus American or other nationalities' voice acting. They get some elements right, but overall British voice actors in the games I've played have annoyed me to death, because all they seem to do are these bloody silly 'comedy' voices.

Prezzer: There's a generic British voice-over voice and it's (screeches like an old hag) "All right my dear", and every game has an 'All right my dear' voice in it somewhere.

Mallo: Prez, you're a Pratchett fan, aren't you?

Prezzer: No. I used to be. I liked

some of his earlier books, but lately I've gone off him. As a game I quite liked *Discworld 2*. I got into it, but not to the extent where I would call it an all-time classic. I agree with Richie on this one: if you're a Pratchett fan you'll like it, if not you probably won't. It does capture the atmosphere of the books though.

Mallo: Prez, you seem to be an advocate of tough adventures. These two are notoriously tough.

Prezzer: The first one was almost impossible for most people. It wasn't hard in a 'this is so frustrating' sense, it was more 'it's hard because it taxes your brain too much'. The second one was easier, but you still had to think. And that's what I want – I want to have to think.

Chris: There's something we're all forgetting here. The reason that both of them were reasonable was by design – particularly the first one. You really had to work the puzzles out, there was no other way. It completely misled you, because you could never tell which objects were going to be useful in a given location. The puzzles themselves weren't that difficult, but you had so many red herrings thrown into the inventory.

Prezzer: In the first one there were far too many objects. That was a criticism, and they did try to change it in the second one, which is why it's slightly easier. The second one also had a more cartoonish style that fitted in well with the style of the books.

Mallo: Graphically it was excellent, yes.

Keith: I think *Blade Runner* is a far more accessible game.

Prezzer: *Discworld 2* is good and solid. It's not an all-time classic, but it's a solid game. And if you're a Pratchett fan – bingo.

Richie: The man is a tit and his work is shit.

Mallo: Richie! Do the games assume you've read up on *Discworld*? I've never read any of the books.

Richie, Prezzer and Keith: No.

Prezzer: It's one of those things where you don't have to have read the books to play it, but if you have you'll know more about what's going on.

Mallo: Good. Anyone want that last slice of pizza? 



DISCWORLD 2

This was a critical hit for Psygnosis in 1997. Discarding the traditional 'side-on' style of presentation as adopted in *Discworld 1*, it often looked more like an animated movie than an adventure. This, and the fact that the game was far more accessible than the notoriously difficult prequel, has ensured its cult status.

Score	PCZ #62, 91%
Developer	Perfect Entertainment
Publisher	Psygnosis
Price	£14.99

Discworld 2: a great game in its own right, whether you like Pratchett's novels or not.



AND THE WINNER IS...

LucasArts prove once again that they are more than just 'the Star Wars company' by taking top honours in both categories

Possibly due to there being less alcohol consumed during our discussions this month, we decided to be generous and award not one, but two awards in our Supertest this issue. First up, the ultimate accolade goes to the *Monkey Island Trilogy* for its contribution to PC gaming history. The first two *Monkey Island*

adventures have defied time, displaying all the qualities of a good book and proving well worthy of a purchase even now. The third is merely a bonus. All three are available in one neat boxed set, called *A Bunch Of Bananas*, from Activision, priced £29.99. It should be sought by anyone who hasn't played them.

The second accolade goes to the best budget buy of the Supertest, which we decided to award to *Day Of The Tentacle* and *Sam & Max Hit The Road* (together costing a little less than 20 quid), primarily because they complement each other very well and are extremely cleverly written. As we keep saying: don't expect too much graphically and you won't be disappointed.

And the rest? Well, they're all excellent adventures in their own right, and choosing to play them or not may be down to a matter of taste. Humour seems to be the common factor of the best-remembered titles, which might say more about the UK games player than

it does about the games themselves. But at the end of the day adventure games will always be there in a variety of shapes and sizes – whether they be 2D, 3D, action or adventure – and they will always be lapped up by the right kind of people. Horses for courses, some people call it.



Monkey Island Trilogy: the funniest games of all time.



DOTT and Sam & Max: more awards for LucasArts.



WAR

SUCCESS AT SNOOKER CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOU
JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL, NOW ON PC. THE MOST RE-



awesome
developments

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CD

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R LIVER, RELATIONSHIPS AND PERSONAL FINANCES.
ALISTIC SNOOKER GAME EVER. PLAY AT YOUR OWN RISK.

Stuck on a game? Feel like you're banging your head against a brick wall? Well don't fret, here comes the PC ZONE team aboard their custom-designed JCB to knock down that wall, cart away the rubble and run over your gaming woes...

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

128 CHEATMASTER

If at first you don't succeed... cheat. Allow us to show you how it's done.

129 DEAR KEITH

We know how frustrating it is to get stuck on a game. Which is why Keith Pullin's here to provide some answers.

130 HALF-LIFE

Having a hard time? Stuck in a labyrinth? Put on your fancy new trainers and follow in the footsteps of Phil Wand's complete walkthrough.

134 SIMCITY 3000

Swallow and digest our strategy guide, and maybe you too can build a glorious, living, breathing city of architectural delights and constructional wonder.

140 HOW TO...

Girls and games - like oil and water? Not after you've read our guide to getting the fairer sex interested in what they just *think* they won't like (no, not that).

147 DEAR WAZZA

Need a hand with a technical query that's bugging you? Our tech-head Wazza is here to help.

150 WATCHDOG

Not satisfied with the service you've received? Pissed off with being fobbed off? Allow PC ZONE to take up your case.

YOUR HOSTS



Warren
Chrisman



Keith
Pullin



Adam
Phillips



Phil
Wand



David
McCandless

CHEAT MASTER

Bamboozled, bemused and befuddled? Never fear - PC ZONE is here to get you back on track with our latest batch of cheat codes

★ CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD



We've got over 1200 games tips and solutions squeezed on to this month's CD. Check out the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser to track them down

NEED HELP?

If your problem's game-related, get organised and...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/CheatMaster, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Dear Keith' or 'CheatMaster' in the subject line.

MYTH 2: SOULBLIGHTER

GT Interactive

If Impatience is your downfall, hold Shift while clicking New Game to access all the single-player levels. Alternatively, sample these mini-cheats during the game:

Ctrl+Alt+/ Win a level

Ctrl+Alt-/ Lose a level

BALDUR'S GATE

Interplay

The surprise hit of the year also boasts some surprisingly useful cheats. Open the file 'baldur.ini' in your Baldur's Gate directory and add 'Cheats=1' under the Game Options line. Save the file and run the game. During play, hit Ctrl and Tab to bring up the cheat console. Now type in the cheats *exactly* as they appear here, and press Enter to activate. Finally, press Ctrl and Tab again to close the console, and away you go...

Cheats:CowKILL() Create a cow-kill spell if you're near a cow

Cheats:TheGreatGonzo() Summon 10 killer chickens to join your party

Cheats:CriticalItems() Spawn all

the game's critical items

Cheats:DrizztDefends() Create a friendly Drizzt

Cheats:DrizztAttacks() Create a hostile Drizzt

Cheats:Midas() Gives you 500 gold

Cheats:FirstAid() Create 5 healing potions, 5 poison antidotes and 1 Stone to Flesh scroll

Cheats:Hans() Move your characters to an adjacent area if you become stuck

Cheats:ExploreArea() Mark the entire area as explored (works like the Clairvoyance spell)

STARCRAFT: BROOD WAR

Blizzard Entertainment

If you complete level 9 of the Zerg campaign in less than 20 minutes you can unlock a secret level. To access the level again make sure you save the game on that stage, as it won't appear on the in-game stage list.

You can also give these cheats a whirl. During the game press Enter, type a code and hit Enter again to activate.

THERE IS NO COW LEVEL

Mission skip

OPHELIA

Enable mission select cheats (type this before entering the next three cheats)

TERRANx

Terran mission select, where x is the mission to select

ZERGx

Zerg mission select, where x is the mission to select

PROTOSx

Protoss mission select, where x is the mission to select

BLACK SHEEP WALL

Show whole map

WAR AINT WHAT IT USED TO BE

Turn off fog of war

MAN OVER GAME

You win

GAME OVER MAN

You lose

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

Upgrade everything

MEDIEVAL MAN

Free upgrades for units

OPERATION CWAL

Fast building and instant upgrades

THE GATHERING

Limitless psionic ability

POWER OVERWHELMING

Invincible buildings and ships

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Ignore supply limit when building units

NOGLUES

Opponent has no psionics

MODIFY THE PHASE VARIANCE

Build anything you want

SHOW ME THE MONEY

10,000 added to minerals and gas

WHAT'S MINE IS MINE

Increase minerals by 500

BREATHE DEEP

Increase gas by 500

STAYING ALIVE

Continue after mission has been completed

RADIO FREE ZERG

Zerg song (available only while playing as Zerg)

TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL

Acclaim

There's only one way to beat true evil, and that's to cheat.

Press the following keys together during the game:

Alt+Ctrl+B Enable boxes

Alt+Ctrl+R Toggle rain

Alt+Ctrl+W Toggle wind

Alt+Ctrl+S Toggle snow

Also give this a go: at the firing range press Alt, Ctrl and T. Now fire, and a set of co-ordinates appears. Use the cursor keys to adjust the figures so they read 0,0 and your weapon is targeted.

COMMANDOS: BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

Eidos Interactive

Live a bit longer by typing "gonzo1982" during a game to enable the cheat mode, then push the following keys:

Ctrl + I Invincibility
Ctrl, Shift + N Skip level
Shift + V Enemy can't see you
Shift + X Move selected commandos to current pointer position

ROLLCAGE

Psynopsis

Psynopsis' frantic racer getting the better of you? Don't worry - get back in the driving seat by tapping in these codes on any of the game's menus. If you want to deactivate a cheat, just type the same code again.

WARPSPEDDMRSULU

Hyper speed

WRECKEDONSPEED
Mega speed
JACKIMFLYING
High gravity
FLYMETOTHEMOON
Medium gravity
BRINGMEBACKTOEARTH
Restore normal gravity
REFLECTIONS
Mirror mode
GIVEMESCORPIO
Scorpio league
GIVEMETAURUS
Taurus league
TROTTERS
Expert difficulty
BIGANDPINK
Hard difficulty
IAMALAZYBASTARD
Debug menu

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT (V1.33)

Eidos Interactive

Considering how difficult the game is, there are few cheats available for this sneak 'em up.

However, we did manage have come up with these:

If you're stuck on any mission, press Ctrl, Alt, Shift and End simultaneously to skip to the next one.
Create a level select by adding the line 'starting_mission X' in your 'dark.cfg' file (where X is the mission number). When you select New Game the game begins on your specified stage.

If money's a problem for you, add the line 'cash_bonus' to the 'dark.cfg' file in the Thief directory on your hard drive.

RETURN TO KRONDOR

Sierra

For free and infinite spells try this handy hint:

1. Edit the 'rtkrondor.ini' file in your Return To Krondor directory and add the following lines at the bottom:

[Console]
Console=1

2. When the game reaches its final introduction screen, press Alt and C to bring up the console prompt (the green \$ sign).
3. Type 'PYROMANIA' followed by pressing Enter.
4. Press Alt and C again to remove console prompt.
5. You now have serious magical capabilities. Go zap 'em, baby!

DELTA FORCE

Novalogic

If you want a crack unit, hit the '1' key to bring up the console, and follow that by entering some or all of the following codes:

iwillsurvive	God mode
raindropskeepfallinomyhead	Airstrike
takeittothelimit	Ammo
hitnewithyourbestshot	reload
	Computer
	AI increase

CALL OUR TIPS LINE
0171 917 7698
THURS 1.30PM-5.30PM



Richard Crook here will answer any question you have. Possibly

Email us for a quick response:
Tipszone@hotmail.com

DEAR KEITH

There's always a solution to your gaming problems, even if it doesn't feel like it while you're trying to find the egg to give to the chicken to... you know the drill. Luckily *Keith Pullin* has a few answers up his sleeve

CLOD HOPPER

Q I have a problem with *Thief: The Dark Project*. I know that the aim of the game is to sneak around, and to be honest I'm pretty good at doing. My trouble lies with sword fighting: I just can't win a single swashbuckling encounter. Could you give me a few tips that might at least enable me to survive longer than two seconds?

Phil Graham, London

A Well, my first tip would be to avoid hand-to-hand combat in the first place. Obviously that's easier said than done, so if you do find yourself face to face with a Hammer follow these simple rules: Firstly, if you see a sword being swung, edge backwards to avoid it – but don't back up so that you hit a wall – that'll definitely spell curtains. Secondly, time so that you only ever attack after your enemy has swung their sword – that's when they're most vulnerable. And that's all there is to it.

A COMPLETE ZORK

Q Have you heard of *Zork Nemesis*? I certainly hope so, because I want you to help me out on a small problem near the end. Basically it's the door to the alchemy lab with the five skulls as the lock – I just can't get in. I probably foolishly missed something earlier on, and would appreciate any advice you can give.

Lenny Blair, Warwick

A You're right, you have missed something. But don't worry, it's not too far away. You have to go back to Malveux's bedroom and read the book with the golden mirror from his study. When you've done this, return to the laboratory door and rotate the skulls so that their jaws face the following directions (from left to right): down, left, down/right, down/left, right. Give that a try. Good luck.

EVIL THAT WOMEN DO

Q I'm exploring the police HQ in *Resident Evil 2* and have come across an old typewriter that apparently enables me to save the game. The thing is, I'm told I need an ink ribbon in order to do this, but I haven't got one. Is the game bugged? I hope not, because I desperately need to save. What can I do?

Sally Leighton, Boscombe

A You have to go and find the ink ribbon first, you impatient, mutant-killing little minx. Keep searching in the rooms around the main reception area and eventually you'll find it. Then return to the typewriter and try saving again. Easy, huh?

SUB STANDARD

Q I keep getting spotted by enemy sonar in *Tom Clancy's SSN*. How can I avoid this? And have you got any other tips for me, please?

Andy Mackie, Glasgow

A Because you're the first person ever to ask for help on a submarine simulation I'll help you out. To avoid being tracked, stay in the area of disturbed water directly behind a sub's propellers (known as the 'baffles'). Sonar can't pick you up in this zone so you're pretty safe. The only other tip of use to you is to always set out with a mixture of ordnance, namely Stealth, Fast, and MOSS torpedoes.

BLUE LEADER

Q In *Star Wars: Rogue Squadron* I can't wrap my cables around the AT-ATs. Could you please tell me how to do this? I'm going spare.

Luke Waters, Birmingham

A The best side to attempt this from is the right. In other words, come in low and slow from the right-hand side and turn to the left. As you start the turn, release your cable. If it sets properly the camera pans out to a distant view. You then hold left and the AT-AT should eventually crumple. Okay?

LUNCHTIME LEGEND

Q I don't think *Grand Prix Legends* is very realistic, and I'll tell you why. I'm racing at Monza (and I know the track quite well from other driving games), but whenever I try to slide around a corner I always end up spinning out. I don't agree with this, because I know how to control a powerslide (my method works on every

other game), and this just isn't on. I would appreciate it if you could tell me how to get round a corner and actually gain some enjoyment from this game.

John Smith, Brighton

A Have you ever tried driving a real car? Have you even tried go-carting? My guess is that you haven't, because as far as I can tell *GPL* is the most realistic simulation out there. You seem to be under the delusion – probably the result of playing too many poor driving simulations – that driving a motor car is like guiding a bobsleigh. Try braking, and stick to the racing line. These are the basics of driving. May they serve you well.

JUDGEMENT DAY

Q Here's an old one for you. I'm perplexed on *Star Trek: Judgement Rites* (a nice budget bargain) while exploring around in no-man's land. I've kind of got myself banged up in a storeroom and I'm baffled as to what to do next. Any chance of helping me to boldly go where I've never been before?

Bill Thorne, email

A With a joke like that you'll be bloody lucky if... Oh, what the hell. You need to start a fire by collecting some sticks, and some schnapps from the case near the top right of the screen. Use the schnapps and the sticks on the hay. Now use Spock on the guard, and talk the guard into letting you out. There you go. May the Force be with you...

HALF-LIFE

COMPLETE WALKTHROUGH

Half-Life giving you a headache? Lost in a labyrinth? **Phil Wand** gets you back on the straight and narrow

REVIEWED PCZ #71 SCORE 95%



“BRAAAAINS!” This guy’s going home minus his grey matter.

Addicted to *Half-Life*? Don’t worry, *Half-Life* dependency is curable. This, our specialised treatment, will help you come to terms with your addiction and allow you to return to normal living. Good luck...

ANOMALOUS MATERIALS

Once in the chamber, climb the ladder and press the button when asked. Climb down the ladder and

push the cage into the beam when the sample appears.

UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

Make your way back up to the computer room. Go out through the vent, get to the ladder and bear right at the top. Drop down the hole, find the valve and flood the chamber. Swim to the other side. Find the goods lift and ride it to the top. At the catwalk, follow the pipes, crawl along the duct

and jump across the boxes to the antechamber. Swim to the other end and follow the walkway to the door. Use the boxes to get across the next room, then follow the corridor to a ladder. Ride the lift.

OFFICE COMPLEX

Avoid the wire and use the duct. Turn off the power, go back to the corridor and break the glass. Turn left towards the wooden door and keep going. Turn off the switch, open the grate and follow it. Drop down and run for the exit. Go up the stairs to the office area. Keep going to the boarded doorway, press the switch to get into the meat storage room and head left.



Crack open the duct and avoid the deadly wire.

Activate the trolley, climb the ladder and crawl along the duct. Get on the trolley and enter the



UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

next duct. Jump up to the open conduit, follow it and then go up the stairway. Climb through the window. Find the lift shaft and jump to the ladder on its opposite side. Go right to the top, drop down and open the doors.

WE’VE GOT HOSTILES

Get to the kitchens, climb the crates and keep moving. Go up the ladders, then ride the lift. At the next junction duck right and use the conveyor. Climb the crates up to the other belt. Go round the corner, jump down and head away from the lasers. Climb the stairs and cross the bridge. Ride the lift, then head left to the door. Go down the ladder. Now open the door at the bottom and take the ladder down. Take the bottom and then the centre shaft. Press the button to enter silo D.



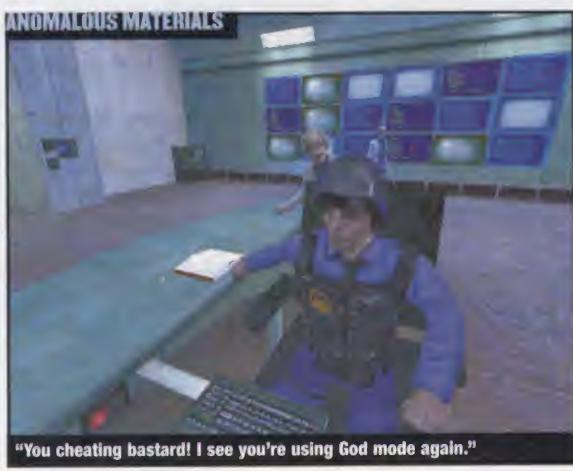
Turrets are a pain in the arse – unless they lock on to the nasties before they see you.

BLAST PIT

Ride down on the lift to the train. Jump across to the platform and climb the ladder. Follow the pipe, climb to the balcony and then to the lift. Enter the silo at the top. Leave the Control Room and climb the ladder. Tentacles only respond to noise and movement, so stick to crawling. Throw a grenade down to distract the Tentacle, then climb down and go through the

ANOMALOUS MATERIALS

Once in the chamber, climb the ladder and press the button when asked. Climb down the ladder and



You cheating bastard! I see you’re using God mode again.”

door on the second storey. Get to the Fuel Room, take the ladders down, walk along the conduits, bear left and then climb the ladder. Follow the corridor to the door. Go down the ladders, switch on the fan and dash for the ladder. Jump into the moving air. Climb into the vent, take the first ladder down and push the oxygen and fuel buttons. Climb up to exit and head back across the bridge.

Jump over the breach and cross the bridge. Follow the corridor, ride the lift and jump to the ladder. Walk to the platform and press the button; get across to either of the ladders and climb them. Find and push both buttons to start the reactor. Get back to the entrance and climb up the ladder. Go back to the Control Room and get to the bottom of the pit. Climb down the ladder and swim under the tubing. Walk to the pipeline and turn the valve. Drop down and walk along the pipe; eventually you emerge in a room filled with boxes and trip mines. Make for the corridor.



① Look for the oxygen and fuel buttons and push them.

POWER UP

Avoid the Gargantua and duck right into the passage – follow it until the ground gives way. Make for the Power Generator and open the door. Go up the ladders, down the corridor, up the ramp and then to the right. Throw grenades into the lift shaft to disable the lasers.

Take the stairs after the lift, find the generator and smash the crate. Activate it from the Control Room. Make for the elevator, go up and back to the Track Control Room. Just before, climb the



Tell you what, matey – you just stand there and keep him busy.

ladder into the corridor. Get the attention of the Gargantua and run into the newly opened chamber. At the far side, use the stairs and then the switch to zap the monster. Go down, through the door and into the main area. Jump aboard the goods train and chug along to the Track Direction Controller. Now get off and find the Track Control Room. Press the button to swap the points. Get back on the train.



① Your first encounter with a Gargantua. Run away. Now.

APPREHENSION



"Ah, Gordon. Shat pants. Rather bad. Any loo paper?"

ON A RAIL

Get off the train and push the button. Drive onto the lift and ride it down. Drive on until you see a small chamber with a stairway. Follow it to the crane controls. Get back on the train and get going. Shoot the points switcher so you head left. Use the lift and ladders to get to the second storey. Continue your train journey, pushing the button to remove the barricade. Slow the train and get off whenever you see blue lasers. Push buttons to remove the barricades, and take a replacement train at the next opportunity. Stop a long way back from the next obstruction so as to take out the soldiers. Find the switch and get back onto your train.



① Look for this landing – but beware the electrified track.

Drive onto the lift and ride up – but get off before the corner and the traps. Get back on board, and at the next points switch make sure it faces up the track. At the terminus, walk down the track and head upstairs. Press on past the shielded door. Use the boxes as a makeshift ladder to avoid the

lasers and stairway. Launch the missile from the button in the Control Room. Go back outside, and through the blast door which is now open. Go down the ladder and climb aboard the transport.



① If you ever get ambushed by soldiers, get off the train and dive for cover.

APPREHENSION

Jump off the transport when the explosive is lobbed at you. Dive into the flooded chamber. Find the opening at the bottom of the pool and follow it. Gulp some air and keep swimming. Find the grate, break through it and swim on to a chamber with plenty of ammunition. Go through the door and get out of the water. Follow the walkway to the ladder, walk the joist and nab the crossbow from the cage, which will fall into the pool. Turn the valve to open the lattice. Swim under, go up the stairs and then left at the top. Enter the hallway, go along the walkways and duck through the hole in the fence. Now find Generator Control.

Take the passage on the right, then activate the generator. Drop

down and approach the centre piston. Get onto the bottom pedestal and onto the piston when it drops. Jump off and drop down. Climb the ladder, go down the corridor and up the stairs. Open the door to the freezer and climb down the ladder. Follow the pipework to the lift. Climb the stairs and open the doors – be quick to avoid the garbage compactor! Now follow the ledge, climb down the ladder and go through the grating.



① Look for the opening in the bottom of the pool.

RESIDUE PROCESSING

Crawl along to the outdoor area, approach the silo and turn the valve. Climb the ladder and ride the lift down. Flick on your torch and follow the tube to the grating. Walk along the corridor to the Observation Area. Now go back to the plant entrance, climb the ladder up the side of the vat and leap across the debris. At the end of the pipe, jump across the platforms and press on. Go along the piping and exit the next room. Go across the toxic waste





Coo, look at all the pretty monsters!

and onto the conveyor belt. Follow the stream, avoid the masher and make your way along the passage. Go back into the water and swim under the other masher.



Head to the right and turn the valve on the side of the silo.

Climb out and find a Control Room with the three levers. Get all three conveyors moving away from the water, and go back to the room with the dead security guard. The button stops the hammers – stop them when the centre and right hammers are fully raised. Jump on the right-hand belt, and move from belt to belt, following signs to the exit. Take out the blue lasers with a well-aimed satchel bomb and avoid the rollers. Drop down as the jaws open, then get off the conveyor and go through into the antechamber.



Inside the plant, take care to avoid the various pile-drivers and hammers.

QUESTIONABLE ETHICS

Climb the ladder and go through the grate. Get over the fence and go down the corridor. Press the red button to free the Grunt. Enter the Control Room and press the

button when the Grunt follows you in. Exit, go up the ramp, climb the stairs and go round to the other lab. Open all the cages and dash to the Control Room. Exit, take a right at the junction and walk down. Walk into the open passage, then go up the steps. Get the Gauss gun and push the button. Go to the hallway and push the second button. Go to the room at the end and push the third button. Walk down the corridor and activate the fourth button. Enter the room where all the lasers point, push a box under the laser shield and activate the beam. Go through the hole and down to ground level. Find the room with the surgical equipment and deactivate it. Keep moving.

SURFACE TENSION
Get to the opening in the rocks. Wait for the chopper to go, then head for the dam and leap in. Push the turbine control button, go back into the water and turn the valve. Swim through to the ladder, climb it and enter either tube. Climb the next two ladders and enter the small opening through the rocks. Open the valve in the stone hut, then follow the wall round to the right. Enter the opening behind the boulder. Clear the fence and jump down.



Head for the control building and the turbine control button. Watch out for the Apache!

Follow the ledge. At the metal doors, head for the cave. Take out the chopper with your rocket launcher and continue to the next



Push the crates into the water and use them to clear the metal railing.

ladder. Go up the ramp, and leap from ledge to ledge. Get to the second ladder and climb into the drain. At the junction, turn left. Now head for the pathway and the door at the end. Go around the right-hand side of the building, down the steps and enter the minefield. Get to the far side and shoot the canisters alongside the generator. You can now get to the roof. Walk along it to the opening and press on. Open the metal doorway and find the lift. Go up the stairs and ride the lift down. Grab the hornet gun.



Look for the small platform with the two pipes.



Run like billy-o round the building when the tank rolls up.



Once the Gargantua squashes the soldiers, leg it round to the right and up the ramp.

Follow the passage to the truck. Go up the ramp and dash past the armoured transport into the alleyway. Go up the stairs, out onto the ledge and around to the right. Jump to the fire escape and then to the roof. Head for the opposite door. At the hangar, go down the walkway. Open the doors and use the big guns to deal with any trouble. Take the organic trampoline to the next level. Find the duct, follow it and drop down. Lower the big lift when the wall is destroyed, then jump through and blow the door with the gun emplacement. Climb up, across to the walkway and into the antechamber. Go down the corridor and find the organic trampoline to get onto the roof. Drop down to the water and follow the pipe to the end. Turn the valve and get to the Control Room.

Climb the ramp to avoid the Gargantua. Trampoline to the tower. Use the map to air-strike the beast, the metal doors and the wall to their right. Aim the last strike at the other tower – this will be your bridge. Go down and through the doors.

FORGET ABOUT FREEMAN!

Clear the railing, head right, up and open the hatch. Go down the ladder, then across the water to the platform. Push the crate into the water and use it to jump over the gateway. Go round to the left and dive in. Find the passage past the next series of cogs, climb out and go up the ladder. Get to the lift, ride it to the top, go down the corridor and head right. Go up the stairs, then use the tank to blow the door. Follow the passage left to the door. Press the button.



The Pump Stations are easy to find and clearly marked.

LAMBDA CORE

Climb aboard the goods lift, climb the ladder and go through the doorway. Head right, then take the stairs. Follow the left passage to the lift. Open the door, climb the ladder and on to the reactor. Take the lift and turn right. Grab the EGON, leave and go down the hall.

Follow the blue stripe to Pump Station 01, and turn on the pump. Follow the orange stripe to activate Pump Station 02. Jump the gap to the next Pump Station, turning the valve on your way. Push the button and head for the auxiliary tank reactor. Drop into the tank and wade to the core. Turn both valves, then climb the ladders. Get to the lift, climb the ladder and jump to the doorway. Go down the passage and around the corner. Make your way to the level B core. Enter the portal at the base of the core, then portal 2. Go under the ductwork and enter portal 4, then portal 7 into another teleport room. Get to the central platform and head for 01 and 02 – find the switch in each of these areas which half opens a door to the teleporter. Drop from the outer platforms into the centre when it's fully lowered, then get to the central platform. Heading outward, skip the middle platform.

Once out, climb the ladder and go through the glass doors. Get the jump pack and get into the Portal Control Room. Climb the ladder and then duck-jump into the portal beam.

XEN

When you enter Xen, you need to long-jump your way across the platforms to the structure in front of you. Use the pools to boost your health. Look for the small opening in the stone – go through and climb through the hole.

Activate the mushroom switches,

then smash the cage. The contents will activate the portal.



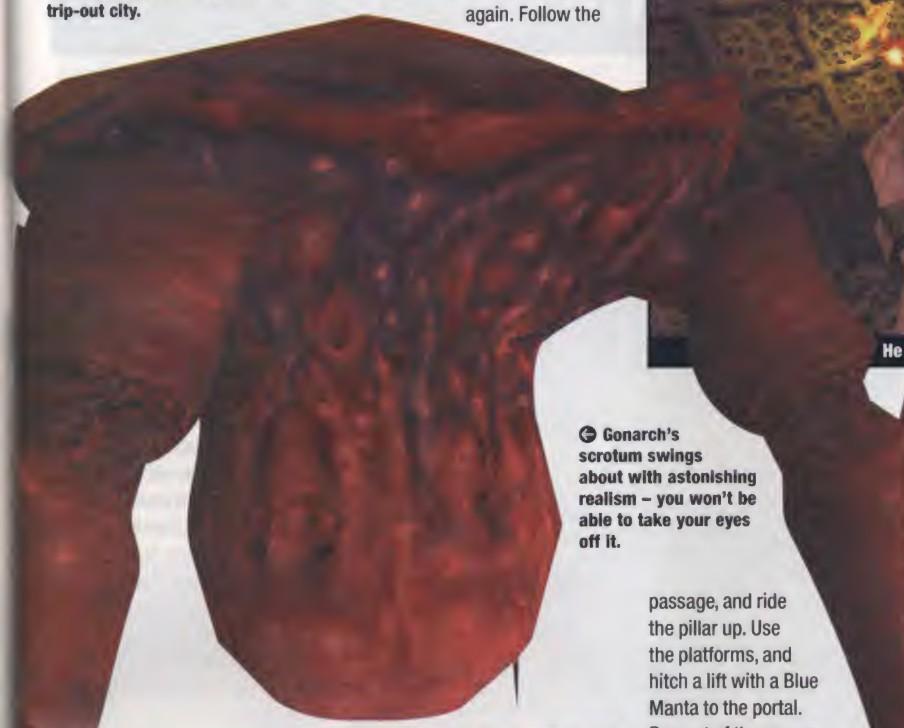
① Prepare yourself for a ride to trip-out city.

GONARCH'S LAIR

Wait for Gonarch to arrive. Aim your firepower at the sac. When she scarpers, enter the cave and keep up a sustained attack. Chase the monster, and drop through the hole into the portal.

INTERLOPER

Head for the far cavern. Fall into the pit and bash the web to fall again. Follow the



GONARCH'S LAIR

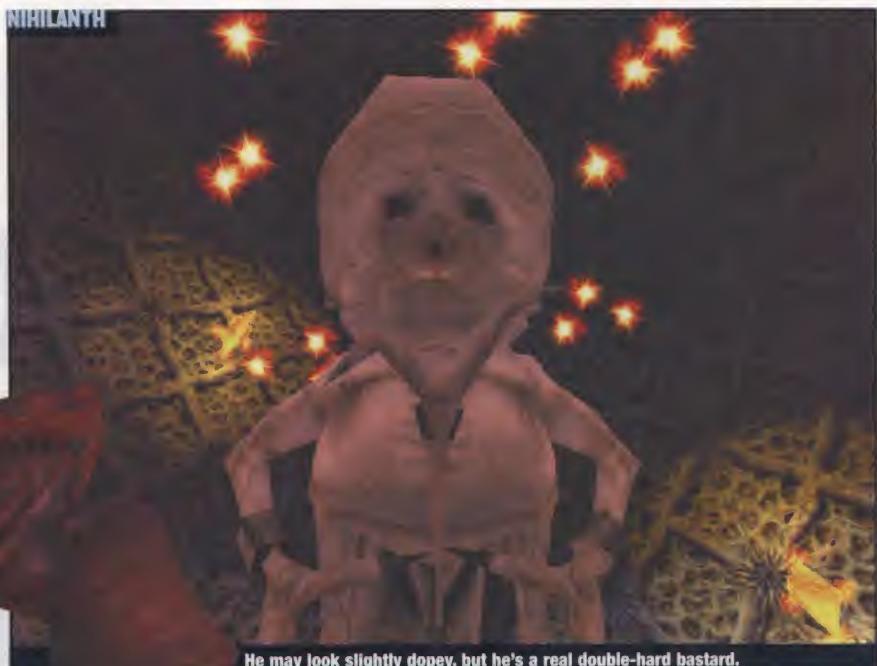
④ Gonarch's scrotum swings about with astonishing realism – you won't be able to take your eyes off it.

passage, and ride the pillar up. Use the platforms, and hitch a lift with a Blue Manta to the portal. Run out of the cavern, clear the ridge and get to the opening. Jump across the rocks, into the cave and the passageway beyond. Use the teleporter to enter the factory. Follow the ramp and ride the lift. Get to the conveyor and follow them to the water. Follow the corridor at the end and use the pistons to get to the next level. Take the passage on your left from the Canister Store and climb into the red ducts. Go up the ramp onto the rotating lift platform. Get to the spiral ramp, onto the second and third rotating lifts. Step into the teleporter.



This is Gonarch's weak point, and the blue cave on the right her home.

NIHILANTH



He may look slightly dopey, but he's a real double-hard bastard.

NIHILANTH

Avoid all electrical charges and teleports. If you do get snagged by a portal, you'll end up someplace else. Nihilanth lives off his power source – this is what you need to destroy. Shoot the glowing crystals and then start on the creature. Once his energy has dissipated, use the organic trampolines to get above him and fire into his brain – yummy. Once you've scored enough hits, that's it. You've won! PCZ



⑤ Not a bad ending (and we won't spoil it for you).

⑥ What you can expect after being hit by Nihilanth's teleporter missiles.

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?



SIMCITY 3000

STRATEGY GUIDE

It's hot in the city tonight... Here's Keith Pullin to cool it down

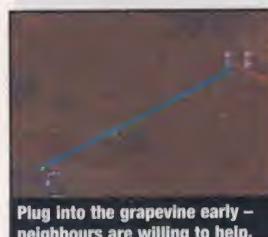
★ REVIEWED PCZ #74 SCORE 92%



Arrange your zones so they look something like this.



Give the power plant a wide berth, and leave room for others.



Plug into the grapevine early – neighbours are willing to help.



Accelerate time and watch your village swell.

Owing to the non-linear nature of this particularly complex beast, there's no walkthrough as such to offer. What we have instead are some useful strategies that are guaranteed to make your city the envy of a nation. So just glance over these pearls of wisdom and get building.

PLANNING

One of the most important skills when building a prosperous city is the ability to plan ahead. If you can envision the layout of your metropolis, complete with roads, railways, different zones and other amenities, the chances are you'll be more successful.

In the very beginning, make sure the game is paused and throw down an 8x8 residential, a 6x6 commercial and an 8x8 industrial zone. Generally speaking you want to try and

increase your city in increments of this size, which usually leads to more balanced growth.

Next, make sure you have a power plant a fair distance away from your residential areas, and also leave room for others to be placed alongside. Using this method you only have one area that's prone to heavy pollution, which can then be dealt with more effectively when the time arises.

Connect up the power and then create some fresh water. Water is highly important, and we'll find out more about it later, but for now just create one square of surface water (away from industry) and place about four pumps around this source. Go to the pipes screen (underground) and connect your zones to the supply.

Finally, make sure you're connected to at least one of your neighbours via road, water, power or rail. Unpause the game, stick it on African Swallow mode and

watch your population soar. Your little town is now up and running. Give it two years or so, then nudge the speed back down to the second-lowest setting.

RCI INDICATOR

When the bar is up, your citizens demand more of that zone, and when it's down people move out. But you already knew that, right?

Upper Marazan Requests Water Deal

Mayor of Upper Marazan

Upper Marazan has been growing like a weed—a mighty thirsty weed. I just can't keep up with the increasing demand for water. So I'm coming to you with a proposal, Mayor God.

Would you sell us some water? We'll pay you \$12 monthly if you supply us with 1,000 cubic meters of water. If for any reason you should terminate this deal without our consent, we will charge you a

Take Action:

Accept Deal **Reject Deal**

Impact Analysis:

Let someone buy your water to start with – it's a source of extra income.

WHEELIN' AND DEALIN'

At first your neighbours offer you plenty of deals (providing you're connected to them). If anyone offers to take away your garbage, accept. The removal price is pretty low and it solves a messy pollution problem. Alternatively, a neighbour may offer to buy water from you – accept this too. It brings much-needed income into the city, and if you add a couple more pumps you'll have loads of the stuff to spare anyway. Refuse all other deals – just make sure that your exports are greater than your imports.

LEND US A GRAND?

By 1905 your city should be doing okay. Hopefully you've remembered to include some schools, police stations and fire stations, not to mention parks. Greenery keeps the hippies happy and ultimately raises land value.

Unfortunately this early expenditure means cash starts to get a bit tight. Don't worry too much though, as there's no shame in borrowing money early in the game. In fact your financial advisor usually has such faith in you that he's positively rapt about the idea.

Keep your books tight. You don't want massive expenditures.

Category	Min Yr	Total	Avg Cost	Amount Paid
Year-to-Date Income	\$1,822			
Estimated Income	\$1,822			
Year-to-Date Exp.	\$1,790			
Estimated Exp.	\$1,790			
Current Funds	\$2,390			
Total Free Cash	\$2,390			

It may seem like a lot of money, and it is, but it doesn't take long to pay back the loan.

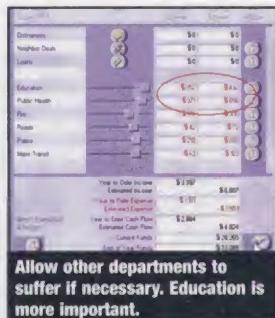
Category	Min Yr	Total	Avg Cost	Amount Paid
Borrowed Money	\$10,000			
Interest Paid	\$200			
Interest Paid (Total)	\$200			
Interest Paid (Avg)	\$200			
Interest Paid (Last Month)	\$200			

Take out a couple of loans (50,000 Simoleons) and spend wisely on increasing your residential areas, as well as your water and power production. Set up a few landfill sites too, and see whether you can wangle a deal with a neighbour to dump trash in your city.

Now it's time to be patient. Speed up the game again, and after about ten years your loans should be paid off. In the meantime, your existing deals and any others you've negotiated should be helping your income, and people should be turning up in their thousands.

BUDGETS

Health and education are the key funding issues you need to concentrate on. Providing plenty of schools is pointless unless you have enough money to run them properly. Not only does a good education policy attract sims to your city, it also pulls in high-technology industry too, which means you can replace the heavy-industry zones which



Allow other departments to suffer if necessary. Education is more important.

produce loads of pollution, with cleaner light-industrial zones. Ultimately, if you keep your education budget in good order your sims will be a healthy, intelligent bunch with well-paid jobs. In other words, there'll be no cause for complaint.

PORTS AND AIRPORTS

Set up a seaport as soon as you can. Ships from other parts of the world boost your industry and especially commercial sectors. From experience, commercial areas are definitely the most difficult to sustain, so if you can set up more than one



A thriving seaport is essential for a prosperous commercial sector.

HOW TO DEAL WITH...

Certain rarities occur in your lovely city which result in a fair amount of disruption. You need to deal with these as quickly as possible

RIOTS

If you have good police coverage, just send the feds into the fray and they'll disperse the hoodlums in seconds. A blue lollipop appears on the map when the police are on their way.

FIRE

Just send the fire engine to the scene of the blaze. A red lollipop appears on the map when they're rolling. The speed of their response depends on the number of fire stations in the area, so make sure your coverage is good.

TORNADOES

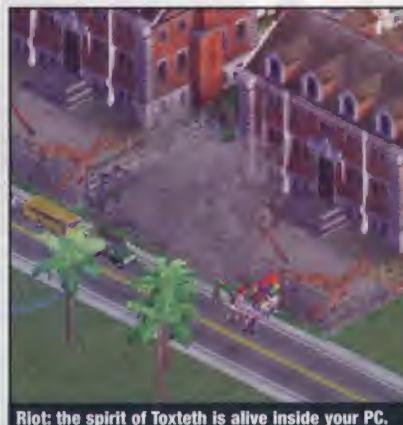
Set off the warning siren the moment one appears. This minimises damage and casualties, and your people love you all the more for warning them early.

EARTHQUAKES

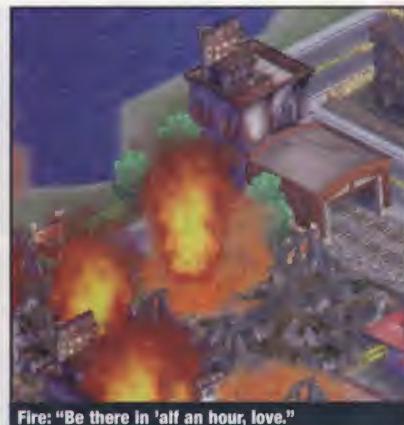
Once again, set off the siren if you get the chance, but the rest is pretty much down to fate. Obviously it's worth enacting the building strengthening ordinance to keep the damage to a minimum, but overall it's how quickly you clear up that's the real disruption factor.

UFOS

Put everybody on alert and... Ah, what the hell, they come in peace anyway. Don't they?



Riot: the spirit of Toxteth is alive inside your PC.



Fire: "Be there in 'alf an hour, love."



Tornado: watch out, watch out, there's a twister about.



Earthquake: shake it, baby. Make the earth move for me.



UFO: women wonder why their husbands have neck marks.

WANT TO SEE THE FUTURE OF ONLINE GAMING?

QUENCHING A THIRST

Proper water management ensures plenty of water for your guzzling sims, and some for your neighbours too. Here's how to do it



1 The first trick in nurturing a successful water supply is to create surface water away from salt water.



2 Now arrange your pumping stations around the surface water – you can get 16 stations around one single square.



3 Connect your city to the water supply, but don't lay unnecessary pipes – if a zone is coloured blue it's watered.

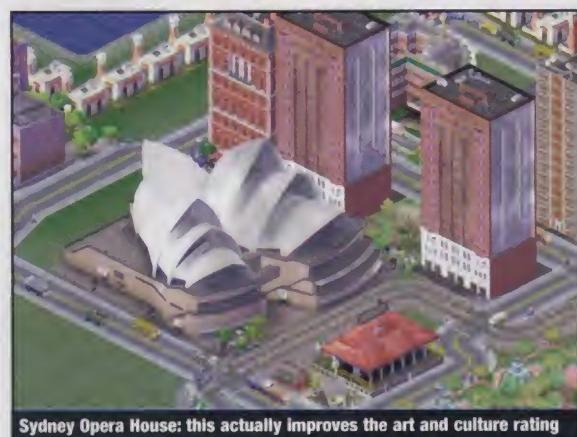


4 Add more pumping stations when necessary. Any surplus production can be sold to a neighbour.

Eventually you have to replace your pumping stations, which you can do in two ways. The first is to simply demolish the old pump and put a new one in its place. The second method is to buy water treatment plants that convert sea water into fresh water. You won't have access to these until around 1970, but when you do it's actually the easiest option, as they produce more water and last longer.



Big Ben: it looks good, and the sims absolutely love it – it's quaint, apparently.



Sydney Opera House: this actually improves the art and culture rating of your sims. As if the Aussies know anything about that.



Zoo: place this near residential zones for the greatest effect.



Ballpark: another little gimmick that puts the fun into finance.

Port the rewards are priceless. But remember: ports are dirty, filthy places full of sweaty, foul-mouthed dockers. Don't place them near residential zones, as the many forms of pollution will be more than the inhabitants of those places can bear.

After a while you also get the chance to build an airport. Like the seaport, it has a positive effect on your economy. Keep it away from residential areas, but well connected by road and rail.

LANDMARKS & LEISURE

These not only make your city look cool, they also raise the 'aura' of your urban sprawl. Landmarks that go down particularly well are Sydney Opera House, the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben and the twin towers of New York's World Trade Centre. You can only have ten landmarks per city, but choose wisely and they can stimulate commercial growth and tempt tourists.

It's the same scenario with

leisure facilities. If you place a marina in an estuary, it increases the value of surrounding land and instantly boosts any commercial or residential zones nearby. Zoos make the life of your inhabitants slightly more interesting and are especially effective near residential zones. Sims love to have fun, so make sure you also create plenty of ballparks. The general rule of thumb with these types of buildings is quite simply 'the more the merrier'.

REWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

As mayor you're constantly inundated with suggestions and possibilities. These deals can look great on the surface, but can in fact harbour a huge disadvantage for you in the long run. For example, having the toxic waste factory in your town means loads of cash, but the amount of pollution it brings with it – and the subsequent exodus of the populace – eventually puts a

heavy burden on your resources. And then there's the casino – the amount of crime it attracts is hardly worth the small amount of revenue it brings in.

One of the better options is the military airbase and defence contractor. As long as you keep the GIs away from your dense residential areas and create a kind of army satellite village for them, things work well. An even better opportunity is the university. This is a direct result



Airports are important for industry and boast commercial benefits.

CHEATS

Capital City blues? Don't worry, bring up the cheat console by pressing Ctrl, Shift, Alt and C at the same time, and type the following codes:

garbage in, garbage out Access all garbage buildings

power to the masses Access all power buildings

water in the desert Access all water buildings

i am weak Free buildings, utilities, zoning, transportation, trees and surface water

call cousin Vinnie Dodgy geezer offers you some extra cash

zyxwvu Type this after refusing the 'call cousin Vinnie' code to be given a majestic castle. This increases land value, aura, and other useful things

terrain one up Raise the terrain by 1

terrain one down Lower the terrain by 1

terrain ten up Raise the terrain by 10

terrain ten down Lower the terrain by 10

pay tribute to your king Access all available rewards

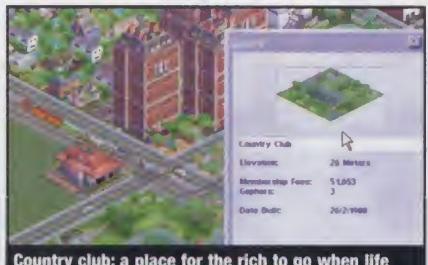
i love red tape Access all ordinance

let's make a deal Neighbour/business deal(s) offered

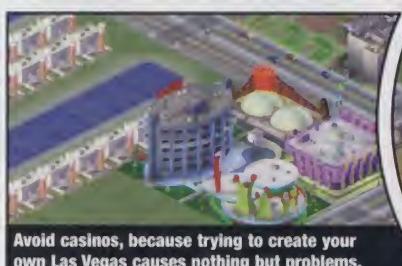
nerdz root High-tech industry

salt on Salt water ocean

salt off Freshwater ocean



Country club: a place for the rich to go when life gets too stressful.



Avoid casinos, because trying to create your own Las Vegas causes nothing but problems.

of a good education budget, and further increases the intelligence of your sims.

BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT

Eventually, after approximately 100 years, your city should become completely self-sufficient. You should terminate all neighbourhood deals and ensure you have everything in place to fend for yourself. Never sell water after about 1985 – your neighbours want too much and

the cost of production just isn't viable. Furthermore, if you inadvertently terminate the deal by miscalculating the amount of water you have, the penalties are astronomical.

Rubbish should be dealt with efficiently, as pollution becomes a big issue later in the game. You'll need plenty of landfill areas and recycling plants, all well away from residential zones.

You should also build an

underground tube network, as it

lowers air pollution levels and is a faster way to travel. One way of guaranteeing an effective service is to place subway stations automatically into your plans as you are building your city. Finally, when you have enough money to complete the system, the stations are already there and you don't have to demolish anything to make room for them.



Make your landfill areas as big and as far away from the rest of your city as possible.



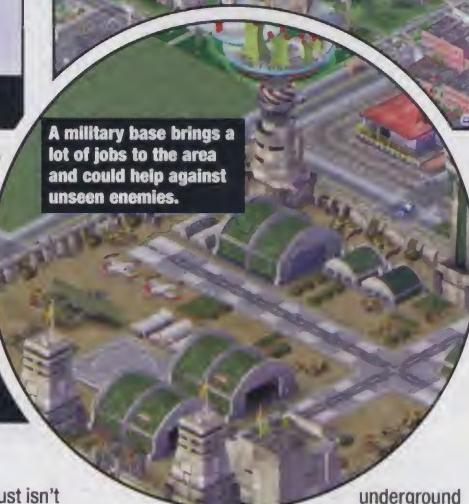
Recycling plants follow the same rules as landfills.



The perfect subway system should look something like this.



A military base brings a lot of jobs to the area and could help against unseen enemies.



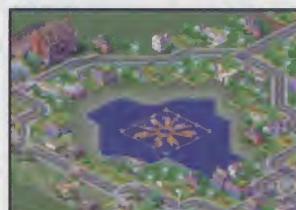
VARIETY OF CITY LIFE

One of the biggest complaints levelled at *SimCity 3000* is that once you've created a thriving metropolis it gets a bit boring. If that's the case, why not diversify? After all, the aim of the game is not necessarily to create the biggest city, but to find different methods of doing so. Try these for size



CITY IN THE SKY

Try raising a city on the side of a mountain. You need to be a dab hand with the landscape tools in order to create plateaux for your zones. You can put a statue of yourself at the summit too.



YO, REDNECK!

There's no law saying you have to create an urban sprawl. One of the most challenging missions is to create a small town and keep the population to about 5000. It's hard, but it's also very rewarding.



DESERT ISLAND

Create a small island and then pack as many people as you possibly can onto it. The key to success here is zone management. Look on it in the same way as you would a posh council estate.



SATELLITE METHOD

Build many little towns, each independent from one another. The biggest challenge is to stop them from joining together and thus creating a terrible mess.



HOME TOWN

Yes, it's the perennial favourite: recreate a city of your choice. There are now specific buildings that actually enable you to do this even more accurately, so take the opportunity to do so.

APRIL 99



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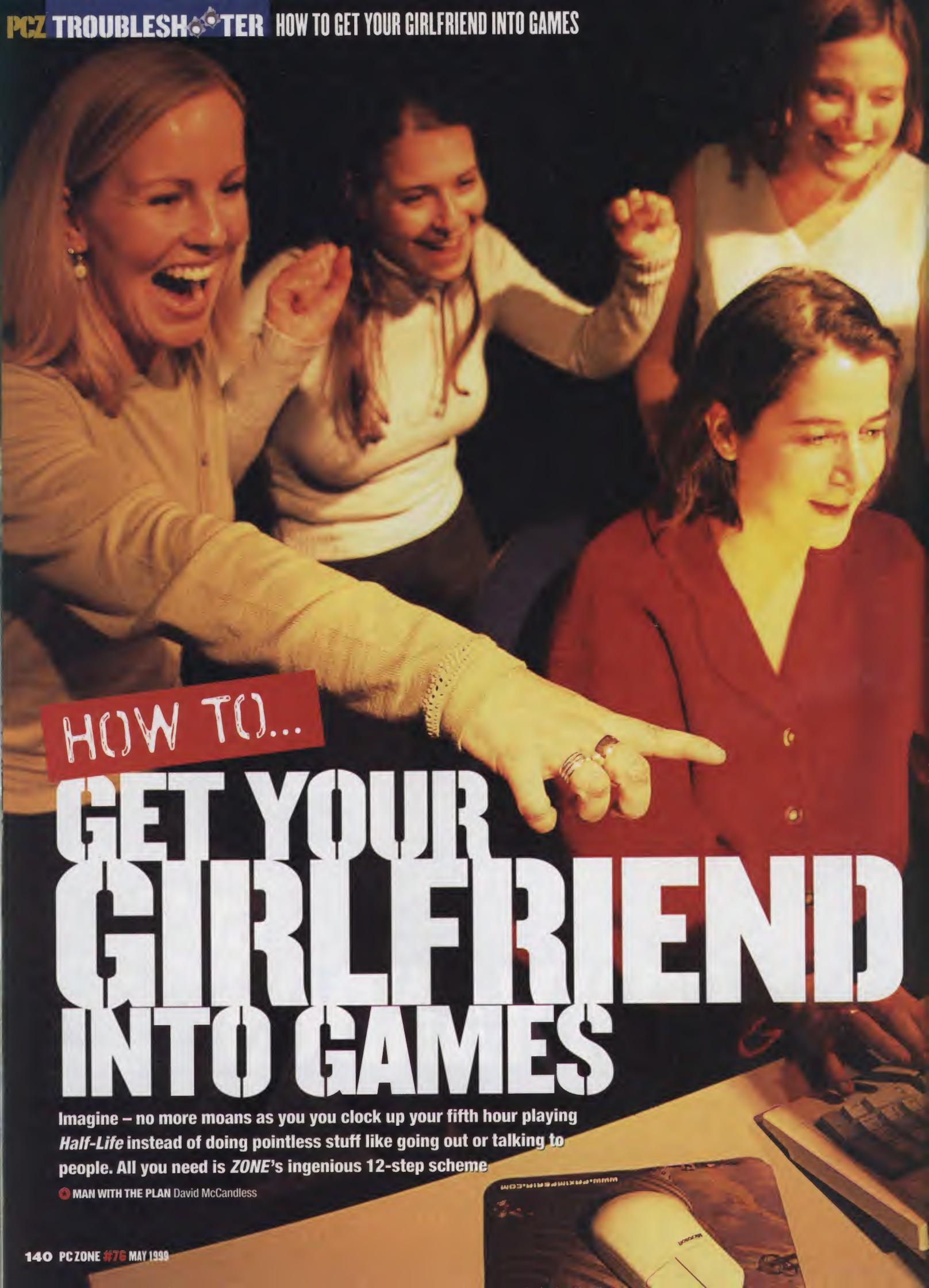
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COMMANDOS

BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

THE ULTIMATE STAND-ALONE GAME
WITH 8 NEW MISSIONS



HOW TO...

GET YOUR GIRLFRIEND INTO GAMES

Imagine – no more moans as you clock up your fifth hour playing *Half-Life* instead of doing pointless stuff like going out or talking to people. All you need is ZONE's ingenious 12-step scheme

© MAN WITH THE PLAN David McCandless



You've been playing games for years, but just imagine what they must look like from a non-gamer's point of view. They suck. The graphics are crap. Look out of your window – that's good graphics. These just look shoddy and blocky in comparison.

And what's with all the violence? Why do you have to kill everybody? Why can't you just talk to them? And what are these locations? Cathedrals? Dungeons? Catacombs? God, it's all so dark and depressing. And why are there so many blokes in these games? And what the hell am I doing spending hours playing this when I could be out talking to people, reading books, watching films, living life...

This is how girls think.

Girls and games rarely mix. They rarely mix because you – man, boy, bloke, fellow, chap, me lad – you designed them.

Unlike most other examples of popular culture, computer games are predominantly designed and programmed by blokes and so inevitably appeal to men and the male tick-list of desirable experiences: being a superhero, being competitive, being murderous, and doing things fast.

Sure, we play the odd puzzler like *Tetris*. And yes, we can be found occasionally talking to elves in adventure games. But on the whole, we want violence, people's heads exploding, fast cars, big jets and gouts of hot arterial blood splattered against cobblestones. We want wars and vast armies of ourselves crushing other vast armies of people different to us into the dust.

She thinks: "Why play stupid computer games when you could be making me a cup of tea, paying me some attention, taking me out (or whatever your relationship revolves around)?"

You think: "Why waste valuable time attending to you when I've got to complete this freaking level?"

She strops. You grit your teeth. You feel bad about playing so you grab what gameplay you can in unsatisfying snatches, standing up every five to ten minutes and stroking her hair.

You say: "You okay?" She says: "Yeah. Guess so." You sprint back to your machine for another five-minute burst. Suddenly it's 2am. She's face-down asleep and you're having just one more go.

Relationship: terminated.

Obviously, the ideal situation would be for both of you to like games. Those with PlayStations will probably have already experienced a touch of curiosity about games from their partners. But if the PlayStation is designed to be simple and appealing, the PC is a horrible beige monolith, forced to do games as an afterthought.

But it can be done. You *can* get your girlfriend playing games. We at PC ZONE have designed a 12-Part System. It takes some planning and no small amount of patience. We can't guarantee 100 per cent results but we believe, if you follow this plan, at the least, she will have some idea of why the hell you play games in the first place.

THE 12 RULES OF GIRLFRIEND GAMING

Step-by-step techniques for getting your girlfriend into games

1 CHOOSE WISELY

There's no point throwing her directly into *Falcon 4* or *Dark Reign II*. Keep your game choices simple and realistic. Choose a game with strong interactive qualities and with real-life locations. There aren't, however, many good girl games on the PC.

PC ZONE chooses:

PHOTOS Phil Ward

Half-Life

The hazard course is a particularly good starting point. It takes a while to get going but once they're hooked, they'll never stop.

Tomb Raider III

Despite what feminists say about her bosoms, girls like playing girls. Especially strong, agile ones.

Motocross Madness

Great driving game set 'outside', with hyper-realistic graphics. Exhilarating and amusing.

Creatures 2

Yeah, yeah, they "get to raise babies". Easy joke.

Worms

Because you can name the worms and then blow them up.

Quake II

Multiplayer especially. They'll hate it at first but try and try again. They'll get it.

Grim Fandango

Interactive, movie-like, funny, with a plethora of locations and mysteries. How much more girly can a game get?

Others (recommended by visitors to our website)

Puzzle Bobble, *You Don't Know Jack*, *Baku Baku*, *Animal*, *Civilization*, *SimCity 3000*, *Sam & Max*, *Broken Sword*, *Little Big Adventure*, *Settlers 3*, *Caesar III*, *Fallout 2*, *Zork: Grande Inquisitor*

2 SET UP YOUR ROOM

Rule number one: tidy it. Rule number two: tidy it again (and vacuum this time). No-one wants their first introduction to games to happen in the midst of a smeg pit. Clear the mugs away. Wipe all those shavings and toenails off your desk. Clear the cigarette butts, bits of paper, Blu-tack and Coke cans out of the way. Get a nice clean mouse – not one clogged up with three months' worth of dried skin. Clean all those manky half-moons of crap off the keys on your keyboard, too.

Use Stanislavski's Circles Of Attention technique to minimise her distraction. Turn off the main light in



If your room looks like this, you don't stand a chance.

your room and erect a side light which creates a pool of illumination around your computer. This makes the computer screen the centre of focus and mutes any peripheral distractions. In short, she has nowhere to look if she gets bored.

3 SELL HER THE GAME

Talk to her in language she can understand. Remember: you are a computer games geek.



1 She is a proper person who cares about things like emotions and novels. Don't use jargon. Ramp up any 'interactive' elements (talking, speaking, puzzle-solving). Play down hyper-violent aspects (flying globules of gibbage, explosions with true particles, realistic death throes). Once she's over her initial reluctance, she'll be as bloodthirsty as anyone, but you have to get her there first.

Half-Life

You want to say: "Next-generation first-person shoot 'em up with strong narrative elements." You should say: "Oh, it's an amazing unfolding story with you playing the central character."

Motocross Madness

You want to say: "The real-time shadows are unbelievable and on Voodoo2 it uses tri-linear mapping for a super-realistic fractal landscape." You should say: "It's really realistic and it's set outside."

Worms Armageddon

You want to say: "It's like that tank game you used to play in school where you'd enter the trajectory and balance it against wind speed." You should say: "It's like *Tetris*."

6 As she tumbles – for the fortieth time – headlong into the lava, do not snatch the mouse out of her hand and show her how it's done. Encourage. Encourage. Encourage

TOP TIP If you're ever in any doubt about how to describe a game, just say: "It's like *Tetris*." Whatever you do, though...

4 DON'T OVER-HYPE IT

"Oh God, this is the best 3D shoot 'em up ever. The graphics are unbelievable. It's such a brilliant game. It rules." Do not say anything like this or you'll create preconceptions. A game will have to have reality-quality graphics and the most involving storyline ever known to grab her after that sales pitch. To the uninitiated, compared to reality, a good film or a great novel, games – all games – suck and blow (at the same time).

5 HAVE A GOOD MACHINE

Don't waste your time trying to convert her to the Dark Side if you're packing a five-year-old PC with a green screen and Sinclair BASIC. Who wants to see a glut of piss-poor pixels masquerading as people and locations? Get 3D acceleration. And get it now. Get RAM. Get a nice big monitor and some meaty speakers. If you're going to use a joystick, get a big, firm one she can grasp (yes, insert crap joke here).

Get a joypad if you can. Remember, computers were never designed for games. It may be more versatile in the long term, but a keyboard isn't as forgiving as a joypad (plus you get to see her 'girl-steering' the pad in mid air when taking corners in racing games). The mouse is a brilliant 3D navigation device, but not at first and certainly not for someone used to pushing icons around a flat screen.

6 ENSURE EVERYTHING IS RUNNING CORRECTLY

As your experiences in bed have undoubtedly told you, there is no bigger turn-off than a complete system failure. Blue screen General

SIX REASONS TO GET YOUR GIRLFRIEND INTO GAMES

- 1 Christmas will be easier (and cheaper)
- 2 You'll have something to talk about
- 3 Her hand-to-eye co-ordination will improve
- 4 The PC could take pride of place in the living room, where

- it should be, instead of being relegated to the attic/garage/spare room
- 5 Er...
- 6 Dunno

Protection Faults are the gaming equivalent of hair-trigger ("Oh sorry, I just GPF'ed"). Create a load of shortcuts on the desktop and configure keys/joystick/sound/video in advance – you don't want to stop the action over and over to adjust CD music volumes or the 'crouch' button.

Don't decide to check your email. Don't receive any phone calls. Don't schedule a clan match. Don't invite your mates over for a pissing contest. Make sure it's just you and her.

7 DON'T TAKE OVER

This is Five Gold Rings of the plan – the most important piece of advice. Resist the temptation to dominate proceedings. As she tumbles – for the fortieth time – headlong into the lava, do not snatch the mouse out of her hand and show her

conventions of this medium."

She says: "Oh, I can't do it"

You say: "It took me a while to get the hang of it, too."

She says: "What's the point? I don't get it. I'm not doing it anymore."

You say: "There's a really brilliant bit coming up. Just stick at it."

She says: "I'm bored."

You say: "There's a bit like *Tetris* coming up in a sec."

She says: "Where's the bit like *Tetris*?"

You say: "It's coming in a minute, okay?"

9 DON'T PATRONISE HER

"Ooh, you're doing really well," you say, as she dies on the *Half-Life* hazard course 50 times in a row. She's not stupid. She knows the difference between succeeding and failing. If she has developed black-ball trouble or a psychological block, change the scenery. Try a different game or a different level. Surreptitiously turn God mode on. Anything.

10 MAKE IT PART OF AN EVENING

Don't just announce that tomorrow night, you'll be playing computer games together. Or lock her in and force her to sit in your chair for hours. Go out for some beers first, or get some wine in, or whatever your relaxation method of choice is. Don't push it. Imagine this is like date number two or three. You wouldn't slap it on a tray and say "Let's go," would you? Maybe you would, but pacing and timing and bit of restraint are going to get you further.

Also, get some snacks in. **PC ZONE** recommended snacks for girlfriend gaming: Tooty Fruities.

GIRL TALK

"I made the mistake of letting my girlfriend loose on *Monkey Island* and *Broken Sword*. It seemed a good idea at the time as she moaned on about me being glued to that 'thing' all evening. But no. Couldn't get her off the PC for weeks... Drove me nuts."

Pig Foetus

"My girlfriend likes adventure games, but she has also played *Settlers 3*, *Caesar III* and *Fallout 2*. Oh, and she used to play *Doom* a lot, but kept screaming and dropping the keyboard every time something attacked her."

Anon

"The only game my girlfriend has ever touched on my computer is *Lose Your Marbles*, which comes with *Plus 98*. She has beaten me at it countless times, and sat ignoring me – playing it blissfully for hours, and hours, and hours.

She's watched me play *Half-Life*, and started asking countless questions like: "Why can't they just talk to the aliens?"

I got sick of *Lose Your Marbles* and removed it. I told her it was only a time-limited demo and had to go."

Dmacca

AND NOW, THE SCIENCE BIT...

Blokes don't like talking about their emotions and girls can't park. Crass sweeping generalisations or statistically proven sweeping generalisations?

A variety of behavioural differences have been reported for men and women, and researchers have zoned in on 'parallel parking' as an example of the differences between male and female thought processes. Men can often 'see' the space, in 3D, in their brains. Women can perceive the gap, but need to talk about it in order to understand its relationship with the length of their car. They ask themselves questions and come to a conclusion, which takes longer than the male approach, which is just to pile in there and use the alarms of the vehicles in front and behind to judge distances.

This car-parking phenomenon also has an influence on the way women perceive computer games. For some women, the 3D space and layout of an area in a game like *Quake* is not immediately obvious to them. Tunnels which lead off from a room, or even the entire architecture of the room itself, may be 'invisible'. This is not, as your grandfather no doubt maintains, because "women are stupid" but simply because they have a tendency to perceive 'negative space', the gaps between objects rather than the objects themselves.

The widely-held belief that women only like adventure games can be explained by recent studies, which found that women spend 43 minutes a day making personal calls and men only 22. Women speak, on average 9,000 words a day, while men utter a mere 2,000. Generally speaking, women communicate more and enjoy the act of talking and interacting more than men.

Anyway, before you start moaning about crap girl gamers or bad parking arguments, remember this: until six weeks into your mother's pregnancy, you were a girl. Then your defective X chromosome kicked in. Everything went haywire and for some reason your nipples weren't absorbed. Your clitoris, however, remained and grew and grew into your penis. Just remember that.

11 POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

It is a psychological fact that people will do things they don't want to if there's a reward for them at the end. You may have to trade. Say you'll go to see a film with subtitles with her if she spends an hour playing games. Or that you'll cook something other than corned beef curry. Or that you will finally pull out those dirty socks that

are stuck like cardboard behind the radiator. *There has to be a trade.* You don't get something for nothing. Hopefully, to use an unfortunate comparison, like Pavlov's dog, every time she hears the ping of the *SimCity 3000* menu options or the splattery fine red mist of giblets hitting cobblestones in *Quake*, she'll start salivating.

And finally...

“People will do things they don’t want to if there’s a reward at the end. You may have to trade. Say you’ll go to see a film with subtitles with her if she spends an hour playing games. Or that you’ll cook something other than corned beef curry”

PUT TO THE TEST

We put PC ZONE's 12-Part System for getting your girlfriend into games to the test. We took a bunch of girls, various games, applied the system and tried to convert them to the Dark Side. Here's what happened...



NAME: Paula
AGE: 27
JOB: Make-up artist
STANCE ON COMPUTER GAMES BEFORE: "Boring waste of time. A typically

mindless male pursuit."
STANCE AFTER: "No different. The kind of thing you do in the absence of any other stimulation or activity. When you're trapped in the house and there's no alternative. It makes me want to go and read a book."
VERDICT: Thoroughly resisted conversion to the Dark Side.

Quake II

PAULA: "It's quite dismal. I don't have any sense of where I am. I'm just running around mindlessly. (*Picks up some health 'biscuits*.) Have those things disappeared because I picked them up? I don't know where I am. Am I trapped underground? Don't know where I've come from, don't know how to get out (*she spends minutes shooting wall fittings*). How do I know that's a door? I don't really understand the rewards. I get mild satisfaction from shooting someone. And blowing their head off."

Motocross Madness

PAULA: "I like the outside setting and the freedom. It's exhilarating to move over nice bumpy terrain. It doesn't look that realistic".
VANESSA: "I love this. It's more me. I love racing. The graphics aren't that amazing. I do like the crashes, though. It's wicked. I could play this for hours. It's brilliant. Wheeeeeee (*performs enormous, deadly cartwheel which should splatter drivers against the rockface like a plum*). There's so much open space all over the place. I even like falling off."
MANDY: "It's a bit samey. What are you supposed to do? I like having race-oriented goals. I wouldn't buy it. It's got really weird, illogical controls."
EMMA: "Don't think much of the ground. How



NAME: Vanessa
AGE: 22
JOB: Model
STANCE ON COMPUTER GAMES BEFORE: "I've only played PlayStation games before. I like martial arts games."

STANCE ON COMPUTER GAMES AFTER: "I really enjoyed them, but I still prefer games that get my adrenalin going."
VERDICT: Converted.



NAME: Mandy
AGE: 27
JOB: Hairdresser
STANCE BEFORE: "I've played puzzle games like Tetris. I get quite addicted, but how blokes can play them for hours or weeks strikes me as strange."
STANCE AFTER: "It's tempting once I get started."
VERDICT: Not much change.



NAME: Emma
AGE: 24
JOB: Archaeologist
STANCE BEFORE: "They're all full of blood and violence. For boys who haven't grown up. I like building games, like *SimCity*."

STANCE AFTER: "A bit disappointed you can't shoot people's legs off, but yeah, good fun."
VERDICT: Success.



NAME: Helen
AGE: 28
JOB: Stockbroker
STANCE BEFORE: "They are quite good, but far too complicated. A solitary, masturbation-type thing."
STANCE AFTER: "Yeah, good. I like them. Although I don't think I'm going to develop a habit or anything."
VERDICT: Our job here is done.

12 DON'T BE SELFISH

Now you have succeeded in getting her as addicted to games as you are, you must nurture her interest. This means sharing your machine.

Remember, girls always win at beat 'em ups. You can revise all the best, most shimmery combos and special moves but she, just by randomly banging the joypad, will triumph every time. If you lose, don't tell her it was "a crap game anyway". Be gracious.

Maybe you should invest in another PC and set up a network. That way, she can play, you can play, and you can settle washing-up arguments with the railgun. Ah, bliss...

Oh, and don't forget to delete that porn.

GIRL TALK

"My girlfriend detests pretty much all games, though she'll happily play *Puzzle Bobble* 2 for ages."

"I showed her *Quake II* once and she thought it was crap. 'That's really unrealistic – how can you possibly spend hours playing it? What's the attraction?' I tried to explain about it being fun, skilful and pleasurable (short-range shotgun blasts to the head), but she just doesn't get it. I'm in marketing and she's in accountancy. Is this an explanation?"

Anon

"I showed her *Quake II* without the 3Dfx and then with, and she said they were both the same and the 3Dfx card was a waste of money."

"I caught her playing on my eldest daughter's PC once and guess what she was doing – typing in WingDings and then changing the size and colour."

Stuart Lawrence

"It was no problem getting her into games. As soon as I got her to take a look at *Civilization* and she realised that world domination was one way of winning, she was totally hooked."

"She likes the feeling of accomplishment she gets from thinking things through, but can't see the enjoyment of blasting that final alien or scoring a great goal in *FIFA*."

Spooky

"I'm a girl. I really enjoy shooting all the idiots with my rocket launcher in *Quake II*. I also like *Half-Life*, *Carmageddon* and *Grand Theft Auto*. However, I also like *Little Big Adventure*, *Tomb Raider* and *Diablo*.

"It does surprise me that more girls don't seem to enjoy killing things with big weapons."

"When I first entered the PC ZONE chatsite, I was asked (insultingly) if the games I liked were *Solitaire* and *Barbie Nail Designer*. Well, I have news for you blokes – come over here and suck on my BFG."

PianoForte 98

"My friend's girlfriend used to love network *Quake*. She was playing all the time, wanting to see how much she could frag me. It was kind of embarrassing, really, because she was bloody good and the look on her face when she had me trapped, rocket launcher in hand, was really quite scary. She was only 13."

Lord Cutlist

are you supposed to know where you're going? I've never been on a bike before... Ooooh! I'm doing a wheelie! (*The girls clap*.) Why is it so sunny? It wouldn't be sunny. It'd be all muddy, like on *KickStart*, with people standing around who you could hit."

Pacman

PAULA: "Immediately challenging, but there's a really depressing quality about it. The 'so what' factor is very strong. The graphics are shit – just lines and dots on a bit of paper. Don't care whether I win or lose. (*Indignant*) How old is this game?"

Half-Life

PAULA: "Much more exciting than *Quake II*. More problem solving – more appealing in that sense. The tension is greater and there's more suspense. The usual dismal, claustrophobic setting. It makes me feel anxious and tense. Ah! Ah! (*Genuinely screams loudly when she sees a zombie*.) That's horrible! I get bored when I go round and round in circles. It makes you aware of how mindless it is. It's quite satisfying – oh (*plummets 10,000 feet to her doom*) but it's quite satisfying to kill a bizarre monster."
VANESSA: "Feels more real than on the PlayStation. It's quite exciting – all these holes to jump through. It's exciting to use

all these fingers. I hate it when I lose. I love guns. I like holding the gun. I thought I just came up the ladder. Why should I go down again? I wish something more exciting would happen. This is boring."

MANDY: "This is good. I like this. I like the fact that you're making progress. I'm excited. I like the way his arm moves (*she ducks to avoid low pipes on screen*). Quite impressive, but I couldn't play it for hours."

Grim Fandango

HELEN: "Superb. I like things like this. I like shooting things, it leads you into the scenario. You have to find something, secret things (*she is getting visibly excited*). There's a mystery. That gave me a rush of pleasure (*she finds the way out of the first room*). That looked like it should do something. I want to go back and see."

EMMA: "It's the kind of game where you'd suddenly realise it was 2am and you had to get up for work in the morning. I like the music that's on in the background."

MANDY: "There's so much more to see – It's a lot more interesting to look at. I like the detail. You're not just doing the same thing over and over again. It's good because this isn't the kind of game where my boyfriend could phone me up to brag about his high score. Yeah, he does that."

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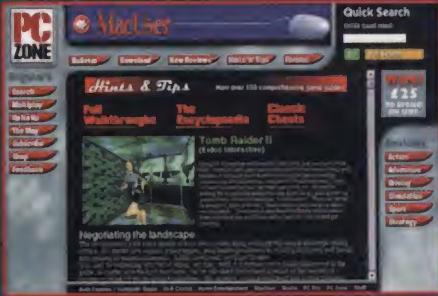




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Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

“I'm constantly running out of places to bolt new things onto my PC. Is there a device that will enable me to have more than one peripheral connected to a COM port?”

DANIEL BESWICK

CRASH TEST DUMMY

Q In your October issue (PCZ #68) you had a guide to reformatting the hard drive. As mine was really, really messed up I decided to give it a try. I didn't back up my graphics and sound drivers, as you said that "these were not necessary to get your system up and running".

Well, after re-formatting it and reinstalling Windows 95, I realised that my graphics were crap and there was no sound! So, aside from my sister moaning at me because there's no audio, I can't play any games.

I decided to look for these drivers (for a 'Standard PCI Graphics Adaptor [vga]' and a SoundBlaster AWE 32) on the Internet. I was unable to locate them and so my system is totally messed up.

I would be extremely grateful if you could locate a VMM32.VXD (VDD.VXD) driver for the above-mentioned graphics card and also for the SoundBlaster. This may sound cheeky, but if you are unable to locate these drivers, will you please, please, please... give me a new graphics and sound card? It's my dad's PC, I'm only 13 and it will take me ages to save up for new boards.

Daniel Brook

A ARGHHH! This is the problem we have all the time here at ZONE - whenever we get remotely technical, someone, somewhere uses and abuses the information, screws up in some way and then blames us! And people wonder why we don't usually advocate stuff like processor over-clocking and manually editing Registry files...

Daniel, the precise words from that article - and I quote - are: "First, you'll need to make sure that you've got drivers for your graphics [card] on a floppy." Did you do that? Evidently not.

The article goes on to say: "You'll also need things like sound drivers as well, but these aren't essential for getting your system up and

running." Now this, in fairness, could have been phrased a little better, but the author wasn't suggesting for a minute that you *shouldn't* back up your sound card drivers. He was merely pointing out that the system will at least start up without them after a fresh format and reinstall.

Anyway Daniel, don't be scared. Come on, it's not all bad. Look, talk to your Dad - he probably has some driver disks somewhere. If not, you can find SoundBlaster drivers at www.creat.com. We can't tell which video card you have from the information you've given, but find out the model name (watch the screen when you first turn on the PC), then go to the relevant website for the drivers. Okay? Good.

Before we leave this one, another quote from the same clean-up article: "Reinstalling your operating system should not be taken lightly." We meant it, you know.

LET'S SPLIT

Q I have a splitter box attached to my LPT (parallel) port which enables me to have two printers connected to my PC at the same time: a high-spec colour printer for fancy pictures (*Oh yeah?* - Ed), and a lower-spec black ink affair for printing large quantities of documents.

The point of this letter is this: I have a lot of hardware hooked up to my PC, and I'm constantly running out of places to bolt on new things. I was wondering if there's a device that will enable me to have more than one peripheral connected to a COM port?

Daniel Beswick

A Don't tell us - you want to switch between two different mice, right? Seriously, we're not aware of such a device (switching serial devices would probably confuse poor ol' Windows anyway). You could add extra serial ports to your PC by way of a dedicated serial or multi-

I/O board but, really, if you need to use a lot of external peripherals and your PC supports it, you should be making use of USB (Universal Serial Bus) technology - it was invented for people like you!

Everything you ever wanted to know about USB (and more) can be found at www.usb.org/.

RIP IT UP

Q While using the Internet recently, Windows crashed and I had to switch off my machine. When I went to use Internet Explorer again it would load the homepage of my Internet provider, but as soon as I wanted to go to other sites it would crash, stating that Internet Explorer had performed an illegal operation.

I wonder if you could shed any light on the situation? I'm using Internet Explorer version 4.01 and Windows 95.

Rob Blake, Southampton

A Well, it sounds like your Internet Explorer is bugged. The crash has probably corrupted a file somewhere so, first things first, you should run ScanDisk (that's assuming you haven't already done so).

Next - and this advice would be exactly



E-Z DOES IT

Q In your February issue (PCZ #73) you had a letter from John Hazelden asking whether it's possible to network computers together using USB (Universal Serial Bus) ports. Well it is. There's a kit available called EZ-Link USB Instant Network, which contains two leads and a mini-hub (which can be linked with hubs from different kits, with no maximum number of users). It costs £82 per kit (two users) and has a bandwidth of up to 5Mb/sec. It's made and supplied by Anchor Chips (01179 001606). Full details are available at www.ezlinkusb.com/.

Alex Williamson

A A few people have recommended this kit to us - thanks to everyone who wrote in. Congratulations Alex - we picked out your name at random and you receive this month's £50.

For the record, reader Jim Birnie pointed us towards a different USB hub from a company called Selwyn (01732 763436). Details at www.selwyn.co.uk/.



Anyway, real hard-core upgraders change their PC case every couple of years. And you get loads of screws with them.

SIZE MATTERS

Q How do you monitor the size of your monitor? When I measure my monitor the whole thing is 17 inches – which is big seeing as my PC and monitor are almost five years old – but the CRT (cathode ray tube) is just 14 inches. So how big is my monitor?

And what's all this 'viewable size' and 'monitor size'? Come to think of it, Trinitron, Diamondtron and dot pitch are a bit of a vague area too. Surely I'm not the only one having such problems understanding these adverts? Please help.

Veebs Bubbles

A Firstly, monitors are measured by the diagonal size of their tubes, not the cases they're mounted in. You've therefore probably got a 14-inch model at present.

Viewable size is, as the phrase suggests, the actual viewable area of the screen (typically an inch less than the tube size). Trinitron and Diamondtron are simply the names of well-respected tubes from Sony and Mitsubishi respectively.

Dot pitch (typically 0.25–0.28mm) is the distance

between two like-coloured phosphors, which ultimately determines the sharpness of the picture. All you need to know about dot pitch: the smaller the better.

Also look out for good screen refresh rates at high resolutions (the higher the better). Flat, anti-reflective screens are always a good option. Go for a three-year warranty too. Er, how much are we spending here?

MOUSE PARTY

Q Please could you tell me if a USB mouse is better for playing games like Quake and Half-Life? Cheers.

Gareth Heath, London

A 'Better' than what? We assume you mean better than a standard serial mouse, your reasoning being that a USB (Universal Serial Bus) port is faster than a standard serial port, so a USB mouse must therefore offer some performance advantage over a serial mouse? In theory, maybe. In practice? We doubt it, somehow.

NO JOY

Q Now don't get me wrong, I love my PC (just ask my poor neglected wife!) and I have recently spent hundreds of pounds upgrading to a Pentium II system. But why oh why can't they be a bit more multiplayer-

accommodating like a PlayStation? All I want to do is connect a couple of joypads to my PC so that I can invite my mates around for games of *FIFA 99* etc. Sounds simple, doesn't it?

Well, I bought a splitter lead and a couple of cheap four-button analogue joypads, but found that I could only use two buttons on each pad when the pads were being used simultaneously (a bit useless considering *FIFA 99* requires at least four).

So I went out and bought a couple of eight-button digital joypads as someone suggested, excitedly rushed home to connect them, but, lo-and-behold, I still had the same problem of only

it sooooo many times. And we're still being asked about it again and again.

In short, as you've discovered, a legacy of a very old and crap design means that you can only use two buttons on each analogue joypad when you have two controllers connected to a gameport. Some manufacturers have overcome this limitation with the help of some digital trickery and DirectX (DirectInput) drivers, but there are still relatively few companies producing good all-digital devices.

Gravis and ThrustMaster are among those who do, but our

"I want to connect a couple of joypads to my PC so that I can play *FIFA 99* with my mates. Sounds simple, but it isn't"

JAMES TAVOLIERI

two buttons working on each, even though all eight buttons work properly.

Am I doing something wrong? Any information would be gratefully appreciated. I don't want to be forced to abandon my PC in favour of an inferior (but user-friendly) PlayStation or something.

James Tavolieri

A Regular readers are probably getting really bored with hearing this question – we've covered

favourite gamepad remains the Microsoft SideWinder, which costs around £20–25. It has ten buttons, can easily be daisy-chained and, best of all, they just work. And you might like to know that they're particularly good for *FIFA 99*.

The analogue/digital thing is explained in greater depth in the comprehensive Gamepad round-up in our November issue (PCZ #69). The phone number for getting hold of back issues is 01789 490215.



Carma II: crash 'n' burn?

CARMA KILLER

Q I recently upgraded from an old P120 with 16Mb RAM to a 300MHz AMD K6-2 with 32Mb RAM and a 1.2Gb Maxtor hard disk running Windows 98.

At the same time I got *Carmageddon II*. The problem is that it wouldn't work – it just froze every time I tried to run it. I looked on the CD that came with my motherboard and found a set of AGP drivers, installed them and, hey presto, *Carmageddon II* worked fine!

"Good for you," you may be thinking. But no. There's a catch. Where Windows 98 previously took only 25 seconds to load, it now takes over two minutes! During most of this time the loading bar at the bottom of the screen freezes and the CD drive goes into overdrive. Help. Please.

David Cousins

A Hmm... We don't know what you've done here – details of your motherboard might have helped. Possibly. Maybe. Do any other readers have experience of a problem like this? ☐

READER REPLIES

Reader responses to queries in previous issues of your favourite magazine (that's PC ZONE)

2x VOODOO2 - NO

Q Before Yousaf Nabi ('Nice Pair', PCZ #74) goes out and buys himself two Voodoo2 cards, I think you should hurry up and tell him that you cannot link two cards from different brands (like a Creative and a Diamond) using an SLI configuration – you can't even link a Creative 8Mb and a Creative 12Mb. All this comes straight from the FAQ on 3Dfx's website, so it's probably quite true.

Proteus

A Hmmm, what you're saying is probably true, but then again...

2XVOODOO2 - YES

Q It is possible to run two different Voodoo2 cards in SLI mode, as I already do. I initially bought a Dragon 3000 12Mb Voodoo2 card and installed it using Dragon's drivers.

I then bought a second card by Techworks and connected it with one of the ribbon cables that came with the cards. After re-booting Windows 98, the machine detected the new hardware and set it all up automatically. I have run in SLI mode quite happily ever since.



Grim Fandango can crash if your PC's too fast, apparently. That's a new one!

I didn't load the Techworks drivers at all, so I assume both cards are using the Dragon drivers. I can now run well in excess of the 800x600 limit of a single card. In fact, *Half-Life* offers me up to 1280x960.

Paul Mugleston

A Okay then, officially you're not supposed to use boards from different manufacturers together. Unofficially (in some instances) it looks as though it does work (although we wouldn't try mixing different memory configurations!). Sorted.

GRIM REAPED

Q Regarding the 'Grim Situation' query in your March issue (PCZ #74) about *Grim Fandango* crashing... The game is bugged. LucasArts released a patch quite a while back (which you can get from www.lucasarts.com/support/index_patches.htm). I had similar problems with lock-ups and sometimes not being able to enter various locations, so I know how frustrating it can be.

However, according to LucasArts, these problems can occur if your computer is too fast!

Roger Isaac

A Are you calling our PCs slow? I Er, thanks, Roger. We hadn't noticed that one.

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UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

1999

Do you reckon you and your mates have what it takes?

WE'RE LOOKING FOR the best PC gaming team in the UK – and it could be you and a bunch of mates who walk off with a £10,000 cash prize between you and a top flight gaming PC each... In addition, there is a £1,500 cash prize for the winning team at each Regional Qualifier and individual prizes for the highest Qualifier and Championship score in each of the eight games represented.

We're looking for teams of between two

and four players to compete in a series of Regional Qualifiers around the country. All you need to do is send the coupon below (or a photocopy) with a cheque for £20 (refunded on arrival at your Qualifier*) and you're in the running – strictly on a first-come, first served basis (with preference given to teams of four) as entry numbers are limited. All team members must be aged 15 or above and be UK residents. Employees of, or freelancers associated with,

Dennis Publishing, The Playing Fields, Microsoft or AMD are ineligible for entry.

Your team will be competing in four different gaming genres, playing eight games in all. Entrants accepted will be sent a Championship Pack with the full rules. If you wish to read these before submitting your entry, send an SAE to the The Playing Fields (address below) or log onto the website www.ukpcgc.com.

* Except the London Drop-In Qualifier, for which no refunds will be given.

The Gaming Categories

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS Unreal, Quake II

REAL-TIME STRATEGY Age Of Empires, Total Annihilation

DRIVING GAMES Motocross Madness, Need For Speed III

SPORTS GAMES Actua Soccer 3, Jimmy White's Cueball II

The Regional Qualifiers

DATE OF QUALIFIER	LOCATION	CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES
5 - 6 Jun 1999	London Regional Qualifier at The Playing Fields	29 May 1999
12 - 13 Jun 1999	Birmingham Regional Qualifier, venue tba	5 May 1999
3 - 4 Jul 1999	Cardiff Regional Qualifier, venue tba	26 Jun 1999
10 - 11 Jul 1999	Glasgow Qualifier, venue tba	3 Jul 1999
7 - 8 Aug 1999	Manchester Regional Qualifier, venue tba	31 Jul 1999
5 Jul - 29 Aug 1999	Drop-In Qualifier at The Playing Fields	N/A

• Teams unable to attend any other Regional Qualifier can 'drop-in' to The Playing Fields in London between the indicated dates and compete on the spot. No refunds of the £20 entry fee are applicable in this case.

• All Teams entering must be able to provide at least two of its members to attend the Grand Final, which will take place at The Playing Fields in London on 18th September 1999.

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UK PC GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS 1999

Team Name

Team Captain's Name and Age

Other Team Members' Names and Ages

Captain's Address

Postcode

Captain's Daytime Phone

Captain's Email Address

The Regional Qualifier we would like to attend is

- At least two team members would be able to attend the Grand Final in London on 18th September 1999. If any team members are 15, permission is required from parent/guardians. Please enclose a letter from each parent/guardian indicating permission to enter has been granted.
- I enclose a cheque/PO for £20 payable to The Playing Fields. Your cheque will not be cashed until your entry is accepted and your rule-pack sent to you.

UKPCGC

The Playing Fields

139 - 143 Whitfield Street,

London W1P 5RY

WATCHDOG

The software industry can be a closed shop when it comes to punters and their complaints. Let PC ZONE ram-raid their premises for you and snatch some answers

ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

DOH!

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a techie problem, write to Dear Wazza (page 147).

WRITE TO Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

TINY R TIGHT?

Q After spending an obscene amount of money on one of Tiny's systems, I asked their customer services department to send me the manuals for the motherboard, modem etc. "Oh, sorry, there are no manuals available for the computer you just spent £1200 on," came the answer. At which point I'm sure I heard laughing in the background. "We don't do manuals. Ring up technical support and see if they can sort you out," he continued.

After phoning the tech-heads (three or four times) and hanging on hold for what seemed like ages, I got the same reply: "We don't do manuals."

Now, I'm sure PC ZONE and your readers understand that the manuals are a very important part of the overall package, but Tiny do not seem to see it this way. I hope

you can see your way to helping me out with this matter.

Alex Baird

A As soon as Watchdog dispatched your complaint, Tiny got back to us sharpish with the following: "We have acquired manuals for the motherboard and modem and will post them today. Our apologies for this error that has highlighted a training issue."

Watchdog recommends that those interested in buying a new computer should get a list of the specs and accessories in writing from the company they are dealing with before parting with their readies; you should insist on having the manuals and Windows 98 listed on there as well. It offers you peace of mind and may help legally overcome any 'issues' that a company may have with a post-sale request for such

items. In the meantime, readers experiencing similar problems should let Watchdog know.

NARKED WITH SAITEK

Q I recently bought a Saitek X6-32M gamepad. Okay, it wasn't the best on the market, but I wanted an inexpensive, reasonably simple gamepad for a decent price.

It's brilliant – the pad works very well with *FIFA 97* and games like that, and it's easy to use. But with one of my all-time favourites, *Tomb Raider II*, it didn't work. It was all set up correctly, calibrated and so on, and showed it was working in *TRII*'s set-up screen. Saitek denied it was their problem and said it was the game itself. I then rang Core Design, and they said it wasn't their problem either – they said it was a problem with the gamepad.

I ended up just putting it down to the fact that *TRII* was quite an old game, and presumed it would work with Core's recent release, *Tomb Raider III*. But when I received PC ZONE's demo, that didn't work with the gamepad either. I am very worried that after I part with my cash, the game won't work with the gamepad and I'll have to use the keyboard again. Please tell me if there is anything I can do, and whether the gamepad will work with *Tomb Raider III*.

Daniel Bailey

A It looks like the blame actually lies with Saitek – they say a driver is available which will tackle your gamepad problems. You'll be pleased to hear that it's tucked away on our coverdisc. If it doesn't work though, drop us a line and we'll have another go at Saitek.

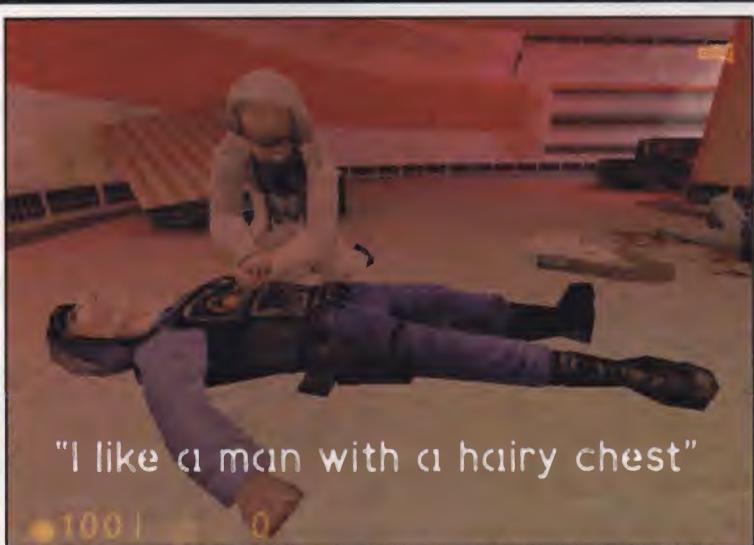
MORE SUBTITLES PLEASE

HEY, DEVELOPERS, NOT ALL OF US CAN HEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING

Q I was enjoying playing *Half-Life* the other day when a friend of mine popped round. I showed him what a stunning product it was and he agreed, saying he might buy it too. The only problem was that he couldn't hear any of the dialogue at all. Which is a shame, because it helps drive the game to its amazing conclusion.

You see, my friend is deaf. The deterioration of his hearing occurred after a severe disease passed through his body. He somehow survived, but as a consequence he can't hear a thing any more. He relies on games to get him through the day as he is now pretty much house-bound. I know from speaking to him that he doesn't want sympathy or charity, he just wants developers to be more considerate when producing titles.

We enjoyed playing through *Sin* and we're halfway through *Heretic 2* – simply because there are text or subtitles in both. I was hoping that you could pass this message on to Sierra/Valve to see if they would consider a patch or upgrade for the product at some stage to 'fix' this oversight.



Subtitled games would provide a better gaming experience for those with hearing difficulties.

If they could, it would be appreciated. After all, games do rely heavily on sound. I also hope other developers take note.

Eber Ozkan

A An interesting issue that Watchdog took to Sierra to see if anything could be done for people with hearing difficulties. They told us that they have had three similar enquiries about possible subtitles for *Half-Life*, and that these were discussed with both the developer and their US office. Product

Manager Lisa Humphries reports that "unfortunately there are no plans to release a patch to include subtitles at present for *Half-Life*. However, I feel that because there have been many enquiries about this that it may well happen with forthcoming products."

While by no means an ideal outcome, your details have been passed on to their customer support department for future reference. Stay in contact with them, and let us know how your mate gets on.

Thousands of titles sit in warehouses waiting to be shipped, when we are fully aware that a problem may well exist.

ANON GAMES INDUSTRY SOURCE

UK SHORT-CHANGED?

Q I'd like to ask PC ZONE to represent us, the European gamers, in asking the US developers/publishers about why we always get the short straw. I've just bought *Baldur's Gate*, and it's a great game. But what I am annoyed at is that US gamers also get maps, bigger manuals etc; us European gamers get the game, a smaller manual, and that's it. It's not as if we're paying less for the software – we sometimes pay

PUNTER POWER

JOIN THE PISSED OFF CLUB

One of our regular readers, Gavin Miller, is so pissed off with bugs, patches and constant downloading that he's set up a website dedicated to the problem. He's inviting fellow readers to email him with any bug reports so he can compile a list of the worst culprits. You can find the site at www.netcomuk.co.uk/~onge/index.html.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

KINGPIN



Baldur's Gate: why do US gamers get a better deal than Europeans?

Col

A First up, Interplay, the makers of *Baldur's Gate*, say that they've been sending out emails to anyone who's contacted their customer services team about the lack of documentation. Dave Pain, Operations Manager, then explained to Watchdog why certain elements are missing: "At the time of release of *Baldur's Gate*, we were keen to obtain the highest possible quality of localisation and to achieve simultaneous release with the US version of the product," he informed us in Operations Speak™. "Unfortunately, the nature of the maps was that the

localisation and production could not be achieved within the time scales demanded by our European customers, and we therefore opted to supply these on demand post-release rather than delay the release unduly – our understanding was that this would not detract from the enjoyment of the game. In order to localise as much as possible, we do increase the variants involved and reduce the production run sizes considerably, so it is always a difficult trade-off."

Hmm... Happy with that explanation, Col? Dave Pain has since informed us that they do now have some maps available, and that these are being issued on request. He finished off by saying: "You can rest assured that we will be doing everything possible to maximise the 'value' of the forthcoming *Baldur's Gate* expansion pack, and would welcome any input you may like to suggest on this."

Get writing, folks.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

The following intriguing email plopped down on to PC ZONE's server last month from a source who wishes to remain anonymous

I thought I would drop you a note after reading about your readers problems with copy protection routines failing to read. I do actually work within the industry in close contact with, shall we say, a large publisher, and have had to put up with complaints (rightfully so) from our customers. Most of the moans and groans have centred round a certain copy protection routine that fails to read on a lot of PCs.

"Believe me, the pressure is squarely upon our shoulders within the department to persuade the customer that their system is at fault, and not our software. It may be shocking to some of your readers to learn that thousands of titles sit in the warehouse waiting to be shipped, when we are fully aware that a problem may well exist (before initial shipping takes place). I personally view this as totally unacceptable, thus the reason for my letter.

"Will the industry ever learn that copy protection routines do not work? They may sound great when sold to the company as a 'concept', but in reality they have proved to be a consistent pain in the arse. For several years our own company has wrestled with various devices/routines that have quickly been hacked/cracked or whatever.

"Our teams argue that the proliferation of CD burners on the market nowadays means that a routine of some description is necessary to prevent loss of sales. I do not buy this, as the PC owners who own burners are also likely to be hooked up to the Net, and therefore have access to knowledge and crack patches that eventually make every protection invalid. I know this for sure, as I am in touch with

a ring of guys who regularly crack routines for the 'buzz' (if you like). It is almost amusing (and sick) to see the company spend thousands of pounds protecting the software, only to then see some nerd have it cracked and distributed within 48 hours.

"Sorry to go on, but I am totally pissed off with my job and totally pissed off with the industry for not evolving beyond this stupidity. Copy protection routines do not stop people pirating games and do not stop casual users passing on copies to friends. Copy protection routines really piss off legitimate customers who spend £30+ to take home the latest software. Copy protection routines should be ditched, and then maybe we can invest more time and energy promoting software in a way that earns respect, not in a way that requires endless heaps of patches to be distributed to annoyed customers.

A As we said at the beginning, an intriguing letter. More importantly, depressing stuff, especially in the light of the amount of mail we've received from readers concerning ropy CD protection routines.

Watchdog would like to hear your views on the above, and also the views of any industry bods who'd care to offer an opinion or two. While it's utterly understandable that companies want to protect their sales, if the picture painted above is accurate then the customer is getting the short straw in the process, and in some cases is being deceived. Is such a situation acceptable? In a word: no.

Yes, *Quake III* will most likely 'rock', and *Duke 4Ever* will no doubt be the absolute business too. But before either of them appears, *Kingpin* will be upon us, and from what we've seen it has the potential to have 3D Realms suffering last-minute nerves, and iD Software *Quake-ing* in their boots in the wake of this highly promising new contender for the 3D crown. Don't miss next month's exclusive review of the game that the entire 3D gaming community is talking about.

THE FINEST COVER CD DEMOS

If all goes according to plan we'll be bringing you exclusive demos of *Kingpin* and *Starsiege Universe*, and part three in our series of *Tanktics* demos. As usual, there'll also be lots of other top demos on our CD for your gaming pleasure.

HONEST REVIEWS

Requiem, *MechWarrior 3* and *Wild Metal Country* are scheduled to appear for review next month. So too is a plethora of add-ons, including the highly anticipated *Baldur's Gate* mission pack, and a collection of new missions for Eldos' big seller *Commandos*. The rest of the month's releases will of course be reviewed and rated too.

TIPS, CHEATS AND WALKTHROUGHS

We have a full guide to *Rollercoaster Tycoon* next month, and we'll tell you everything you wanted to know about online gaming but were too busy worrying about the phone bill to ask. We'll also have more tips and cheats on the latest games than you can shake a large stick at.

INSIGHTFUL PREVIEWS

Braveheart and *Dungeon Keeper 2* come under the special PC ZONE preview microscope next issue. See you next month.

ON SALE
THURSDAY 6 MAY

* Note: this is a guide only, content may change due to circumstances beyond our control

Welcome to the
PC ZONE Top 100. Here
you'll find the games
that in our expert
opinion are the current
top PC games in their
field, as well as a few
extras you might like
to consider if you're a
big fan of the genre

ACTION GAMES



QUAKE II

• The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "Quake II is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



HALF-LIFE

• Arriving a whole year late but definitely worth the wait, this has to be the 3D shooter of the year thanks to a superb single-player game. We'll have to wait and see whether it will beat Quake II in the deathmatch arena.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209100



FADE TO BLACK

• The unofficial sequel to the excellent *Flashback*, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical precursor to the fantastic *Tomb Raider*, it's a classic in its own right.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING

PCZ #44 • 94%

• The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin which used live action in a positive way. Absolutely packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



FORSAKEN

PCZ #63 • 94%

• *Descent* is dead and *Forsaken* is now king of the tunnel-based shoot 'em ups. With huge, varied levels, heaps of graphical effects, weapons and a fantastic multiplayer LAN-based game, it's up there with the best of 'em.

PUBLISHER Acclaim • 0171 344 5000



WARGASM

PCZ #71 • 93%

• Famed for their flight sims, DID finally deliver an action game only they could produce. With helicopters, APCs, and hapless infantry running about, this is as fast-paced as a tank game could be – and it's even better to share.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199



SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

PCZ #71 • 92%

• Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this 3D action game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. With great graphical effects and an involving storyline, it's perhaps just a bit too easy for the *Quake* hard-core.

PUBLISHER Midroids • 00331 4601 5401



SIN

PCZ #70 • 91%

• Until *Duke 4Ever* appears, *Sin* is the closest in feel to its ageing classic predecessor. Based on the *Quake II* engine, *Sin* offers a superb single-player game thanks to some ingenious level design. Highly recommended.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



TOMB RAIDER III

PCZ #72 • 91%

• There's a good chance that in 20 years' time the *Tomb Raider* 'thingy' will be looked upon with as much fondness as *Star Wars* is today. This third outing may not be as ground-breaking as its predecessor, but it's the best so far.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



JEDI KNIGHT / MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

PCZ #74 • 90%

• As a double pack, this ageing 3D shooter and its expansion disk represents outstanding value for money. Dated graphics, but the level design is superb and the missions are some of the best ever made.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01895 456700

ALSO CONSIDER

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT Eidos Interactive • PCZ #72 • 90%

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX Take 2 • PCZ #69 • 89%

UNREAL GT Interactive • PCZ #65 • 93%

QUAKE Activision • PCZ #43 • 96% **BUDGET**

SPEC OPS: RANGERS ASSAULT Take 2 • PCZ #65 • 88%

MDK Interplay • PCZ #50 • 90%

LAST BRONX Sega • PCZ #62 • 87%

RACING GAMES



CARMAGEDDON II

★ It's that game again, this time with full 3D pedestrians. More blood, more cars, more tracks – and now with added missions. If you liked the first one, you'll love this one. If you don't, you can just bog off.

PUBLISHER SCI • 0171 585 3308



FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2

★ The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. The game will run on a 486DX2 but you'll need a Pentium to run the hi-res mode.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893



COLIN MCRAE RALLY

★ Sporting an updated TOCA engine, Colin McRae has become the new benchmark in rally simulations. With car customisability and a heap of multiplayer accessibility, this game should be top of everyone's rally games heap.

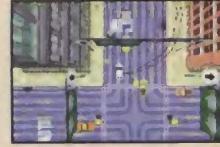
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



MONACO GRAND PRIX

★ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. It looks beautiful, plays even better, and the AI is second to none. You need a hefty machine to have it looking its best though.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 081 944 9000



GRAND THEFT AUTO

★ This is the game that took over from *Carmageddon* as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. *Micro Machines* on acid.

PUBLISHER BMG • 0171 973 0011



NEED FOR SPEED III

★ Some arcade racing games are fun, but if you like a bit more than just just racing around a few tracks then you should seriously consider *Need For Speed III*. Why? Because if avoiding the law isn't fun, what is?

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



MOTOCROSS MADNESS

★ An astoundingly addictive game. Loads of game and race options and tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. Soon available with the pad for around 50 quid. A must-buy.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



MICRO MACHINES 3

★ The manic miniature racing game gets the 3D treatment and loses nothing along the way. The new power-ups might not please the purist, but *Micro Machines 3* is still one of the finest two-player games around.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



MOTORHEAD

★ With drop-dead graphics and a blistering frame rate, this is a ridiculously fast, fab-looking, intense racing experience. Add a great LAN-based option (Local Area Network) and *Motorhead* is the ace of arcade racers.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



GRAND PRIX LEGENDS

★ Papyrus, the makers of *NASCAR* and *IndyCar*, have put the danger back into Formula 1. If you fancy a challenge and the chance to go back to the teams and drivers of 1967, then buy this. You'll need a steering wheel though.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

**ALSO
CONSIDER**

- INDYCAR 2 Cendant • PCZ #34 • 90% **BUDGET**
- SCREAMER 2 Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% **BUDGET**
- DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 Psygnosis • PCZ #46 • 86% **BUDGET**
- INTERSTATE 76: NITRO RIDERS Activision • PCZ #63 • 87%
- TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP Europress • PCZ #59 • 86% **BUDGET**
- ULTIMATE RACE PRO MicroProse • PCZ #62 • 88% **BUDGET**

SPORTSGAMES



LINKS LS

★ The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF

PCZ #69 • 93%

★ Beautifully presented, as always, and sporting a speedy enhanced graphics engine, this latest in the *PGA* series also gets star endorsement by young Tiger Woods. Without question, this is the best golf game yet.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



NHL 99

PCZ #70 • 92%

★ The problem with all ice hockey games is the confusion that ensues after each ruck. *NHL 99* is no different in that respect, but updated graphics, enhanced AI and spiffy presentation make this game a must for fans of the sport.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97

PCZ #53 • 92%

★ This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



FIFA 99

PCZ #71 • 92%

★ Another biannual release from EA Sports that, as per usual, is better than the last. You'll have to think long and hard before shelling out another £40, but if you love footie it's well worth it for the best football game available for the PC.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



SENSIBLE SOCCER EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION

PCZ #69 • 90%

★ It's still top-down, and it's still simple, fast and fun. *World Cup '98* may be prettier, but it can only dream of being as instantly playable as *Sensible Soccer European Club Edition*.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



VIRTUAL POOL 2

PCZ #58 • 90%

★ Okay, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3Dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



THE GOLF PRO

PCZ #62 • 90%

★ If you're bored with either *PGA* or *Links*, then this is the best of the 'mouse-swing' bunch. Good course design and some excellent tuition means there's loads of gameplay, though the putting lets it down a tad.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



ACTUA SOCCER 3

PCZ #72 • 89%

★ Although better than last year's effort, *Actua 3* fails to snatch the title from EA this time around. Mind you, with a good range of options and a huge range of teams to play against, this certainly has a longer shelf life than *FIFA*.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

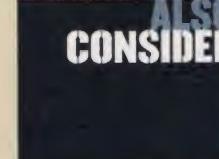


NBA LIVE 99

PCZ #73 • 87%

★ Being an EA Sports title, *NBA Live 99* is, unsurprisingly, the best game in its field. If you're a Sprite-drinking hoop fan, there's plenty here to justify shelling out for the annual upgrade. If you're not, you'll neither know nor care.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



ALSO CONSIDER
There's always a swell of different sports game types depending on the current sporting season. These are worth having a look at...

JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL Virgin Interactive • PCZ #68 • 88%

MADDEN NFL 99 EA Sports • PCZ #71 • 87%

TRIPLE PLAY 99 Electronic Arts • PCZ #64 • 90%

BRIAN LARA CRICKET Codemasters • PCZ #75 • 85%

ADVENTURE GAMES



BIOFORGE

• Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AID* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



SYSTEM SHOCK

• This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the genre. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is still invigorating.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



DISCWORLD II

• Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld II* is a universally appealing adventure game.

PUBLISHER Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000



INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS

• Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255



LBA 2: TWINSTEN'S ODYSSEY

• Twinsten is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area in *LBA 2*, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great-looking and hugely atmospheric adventure. A must for adventure fans.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



SAM & MAX

• The hilarious dog/rabbit duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a point-and-click fan.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255



RESIDENT EVIL II

NEW ENTRY Although not as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255



MONKEY ISLAND ADVENTURE PACK

• *Monkey Island 1* and 2 are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 4567000



GRIM FANDANGO

• LucasArts not only do the best adventure games, but have also recently been doing the only adventure games worth buying. This latest has style written all over it, and hopefully signals a rosy future for fans of the genre.

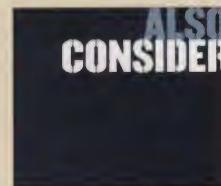
PUBLISHER LucasArts • 0171 368 2255



KING'S QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY

• To mark the genre's transition from point-and-click to a full 3D interface, Sierra's eighth *King's Quest* adventure proves an engaging stopgap, even if it is a little too Americanised. Good but not great.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



FULL THROTTLE

Virgin • PCZ #27 • 92% **BUDGET**

THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE

Virgin • PCZ #43 • 92%

REDGUARD

Virgin • PCZ #75 • 89%

GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN

Cendant • PCZ #36 • 88%

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE

Electronic Arts • PCZ #21 • 93% **BUDGET**

ALSO CONSIDER

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS

PCZ #1 • 94%

• This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



FINAL FANTASY VII

PCZ #66 • 93%

• Fearsomely addictive gem of a game of truly epic proportions. Great graphics, plenty of hidden surprises and massive levels will keep you totally absorbed if you forgive the risible dialogue and turn-based combat.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



REALMS OF THE HAUNTING

PCZ #47 • 93%

• Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it back in issue 47. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap, *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



LANDS OF LORE III

PCZ #74 • 90%

• Westwood know how to tell a good story, and this latest in the series is the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *LOL III* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.

PUBLISHER Westwood/EA • 01753 549442



ULTIMA VII

PCZ #3 • 89%

• Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Check out the *Ultima Collection* for a real treat.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



DIABLO

PCZ #48 • 88%

• Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.

PUBLISHER Zabla/Blizzard • 01626 332233



TERRIS

PCZ #44 • 88%

• A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but it's so addictive that we're still playing it. The various quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.

PUBLISHER AOL • 0800 279 7444



FALLOUT 2

PCZ #71 • 86%

• Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you like the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



BALDUR'S GATE

PCZ #73 • 85%

• With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

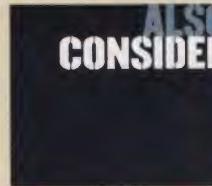


ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS

PRE-PC ZONE

• This took role-playing games away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



ALSO CONSIDER

• These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat to other game types over the last couple of years. However, also bear in mind...

DIABLO: HELLFIRE

Cendant • PCZ #59 • 82%

ULTIMA COLLECTION

Electronic Arts • PCZ #62 • 90%

RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET

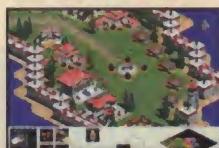
Mindscape • PCZ #25 • 78%

STRATEGY GAMES


X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE
PCZ #52 • 95%

★ A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893


AGE OF EMPIRES
PCZ #54 • 94%

★ Imagine *Civilization II*'s great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000


CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3
PCZ #73 • 93%

★ No fancy graphics, no sound and no online multiplayer options do nothing to hide the fact that *Champ Manager 3* is one of the most addictive games you'll ever play. Forty quid for a season ticket to nirvana? Bloody bargain, mate.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000


POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING
PCZ #70 • 92%

★ The original *Populous* was the game that put Bullfrog into orbit and made Peter Molyneux one of the biggest names in the industry. Now Peterless, the new Bullfrog team show that they can do just as well without him.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442


MAGIC & MAYHEM
PCZ #70 • 92%

★ Based on the old Spectrum game *Chaos*, *X-COM* creators Mythos deliver a diverse and original fantasy strategy game. A strong single-player element and a manic multiplayer game make this a well-deserving classic.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255


TOTAL ANNIHILATION
PCZ #56 • 92%

★ With a ridiculous number of units and its fast-paced action, *Total Annihilation* is without doubt one of the best real-time strategy games ever. The polygon units are smooth, and multiplayer games are awesome. Pisses on *Red Alert*.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791


SIMCITY 3000
PCZ #74 • 92%

★ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442


SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI
PCZ #74 • 92%

★ *Civilization II* was, and still is, one of the greatest strategy games ever made, and *Alpha Centauri* is everything a true sequel should be. Rather than create another remake, Sid Meier has created the game *Civ* fans have been crying out for for years.

PUBLISHER Firaxis/EA • 01753 549442


WARZONE 2100
PCZ #75 • 90%

NEW ENTRY Both Westwood and Cavedog have dismissed full 3D in strategy games on the grounds that AI would suffer as a result of incorporating it. *Warzone* proves them both wrong, looks gorgeous and plays as good as *Total Annihilation*.
PUBLISHER Eidos • 0181 636 3000


CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER
PCZ #75 • 89%

NEW ENTRY Replacing *Civ II* in this list with this remake was a difficult decision. *Call To Power* may do more than *Civ II*, but it takes too long to get into the guts of the game. You'll still love it, but if you're skint get *Civ II* on budget.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 4567000

**ALSO
CONSIDER**

WORLDWARS III: DARKLORDS RISING Broderbund • PCZ #67 • 90%

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON Hasbro • PCZ #75 • 87%

COMMANDOS Eidos Interactive • PCZ #66 • 87%

DUNGEON KEEPER Electronic Arts • PCZ #53 • 96% **BUDGET**

MASTER OF ORION 2 MicroProse • PCZ #45 • 92% **BUDGET**

COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT VIE • PCZ #47 • 94%

CAESAR III Sierra • PCZ #70 • 92%

M1 TANK PLATOON II MicroProse • PCZ #63 • 90% **BUDGET**

FLIGHT SIMULATION GAMES


FALCON 4.0
PCZ #72 • 95%

★ After waiting literally years for this, the wait was worth it. With 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure, *Falcon 4.0* can fly against the best of them – and win. One of the best flight sims ever seen.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893


F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR
PCZ #68 • 95%

★ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece is perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this one.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633


FLIGHT SIM 98
PCZ #55 • 94%

★ Another year, and yet another flight sim to come from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and hugely impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000


APACHE HAVOC
PCZ #73 • 94%

★ Of the three main chopper sims available, *Longbow 2* is the one if you're a hard-core sim head, *Team Apache* is the choice for fans whose preference swings the other way, and *Apache Havoc* straddles the gap. And the graphics are to die for.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337


LONGBOW 2
PCZ #59 • 92%

★ "Longbow 2 is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review. If you don't have any extra graphics hardware, there's only one thing to do – think 'upgrade', 'upgrade' and 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442


JANE'S F-15
PCZ #64 • 92%

★ A hard-core propeller-head's sim that can stand alongside the awesome *Longbow 2* as one of the most realistic flight sims available. Newbies to the genre might find it a bit overwhelming, but it's worth persevering with.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442


FLYING CORPS GOLD
PCZ #59 • 92%

★ Action-packed WWI flight simulation with neat graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WW1 flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WW1 sim currently available.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337


A-10 CUBA!
PCZ #59 • 90%

★ Functional graphics for a game that really does capture the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Although it's slightly limited due to a lack of a fully-fledged campaign it's still great fun, as well as being pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700


JANE'S WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS
PCZ #72 • 90%

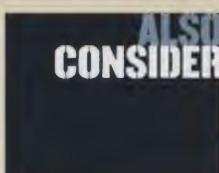
★ It's been a fierce dogfight to see who rules the WWII flight sim skies. *Jane's* combines realism with accessibility and ease, and although the game doesn't have a dynamic campaign feature its graphics make it a clear winner.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442


FLIGHT UNLIMITED II
PCZ #60 • 84%

★ It can't really compete with the behemoth that is *Flight Sim 98*, and as a result is somewhat limited and claustrophobic. However, it does score highly for being more detailed in its smaller area, and much more fun.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



★ If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – hence our recommendation for *Jetfighter III*. Some of the more recent releases worth considering include...

AIR WARRIOR III Interactive Magic • PCZ #62 • 80%

F-16 AGGRESSOR Virgin • PCZ #70 • 92%

COMANCHE GOLD NovaLogic • PCZ #65 • 87%

F/A-18 KOREA Empire Interactive • PCZ #61 • 90%

ON THE CD

WORDS Keith Pullin DISKMEISTER Daniel Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708

250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk. Please do NOT phone the PC ZONE office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

- If possible, have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM etc – plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

You need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.

Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.

Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.



DEMOS + SHAREWARE

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

Eidos

The beautiful game is back, and this time it's bigger and better than ever: more teams, massively enhanced management options, and an interface that's as easy to use as it's always been.

This huge demo enables you to play through half a season, which as any *Championship Manager* fan will testify should keep you occupied for at least a month. You can choose to manage any English team from the four English divisions, and if that's not challenging enough you can even take the management reigns at

one of the Conference teams. And if you've got access to a LAN, you can even try out the multiplayer options.

Needless to say, if you're not hooked after just one hour with *CM3*, you can't seriously consider yourself a football fan. Quite simply, *Championship Manager 3* (PCZ #73, 93%) is a virtual season ticket to nirvana. Play it.

Controls: Mouse



The screenshot shows the main menu of the game. At the top, it says "Wednesday 26.8.98 EVE". On the left, there's a sidebar with links like "Continue Game", "Deedooody MacFarta", "Competitions", "Nations & Clubs", "Awards", "Find", "Change Player", and "Game Options". The main area has a red header bar with "News" in white. Below that is a list of messages:

	All	Messages	Competitions	Injuries and Bans
Wed 26th Aug EVE	Private message from Penis MacFarta			
Wed 26th Aug EVE	Private message from Penis MacFarta			
Wed 26th Aug EVE	Champions Cup groups drawn			
Wed 26th Aug AM	Juan Sorin transfer bid rejected			
Tue 25th Aug EVE	Norwegian search completed			

Below the messages, there's a "Reply" button. A message from "Penis MacFarta" is highlighted in yellow:

Private message from Penis MacFarta

> Why don't you stick your head up your arse?
>
TWAT!!

At the bottom of the screen, there are buttons for "Contracts", "Transfers", "Jobs", and "Records". There are also "Back" and "Next" buttons at the very bottom.

Championship Manager 3: "a virtual season ticket to nirvana."

Prepare for an exclusive kickabout with *CM3*, another exclusive *Tanktics* demo, and much, much more



Expendable: tense atmosphere and gripping action.

EXPENDABLE

Rage

From the warmongering minds that brought you *Incoming* comes another hard-core foray into the world of oversized guns and all things explosive. *Expendable* follows the old *Commando* tack of putting as many enemies as possible on-screen and expecting you to gun them all down.

The dark, futuristic atmosphere is tense, and the action is gripping. If you've been longing for an ungodly cyborg blast-a-thon to play on those dull evenings, then this exclusive single-level demo will surely blow the cobwebs away – providing you have a 3Dfx card, of course. (See game review on page 88.)



Want some? Have a go then!

Controls: Joystick/keyboard

CURSORS Forward/back/left/right

SPACE Fire weapon

LEFT SHIFT Strafe

A Fire grenade

LEFT ALT Switch weapon

Z Sidestep left

X Sidestep right



Looking for a cyborg blast-a-thon? You've just found one.



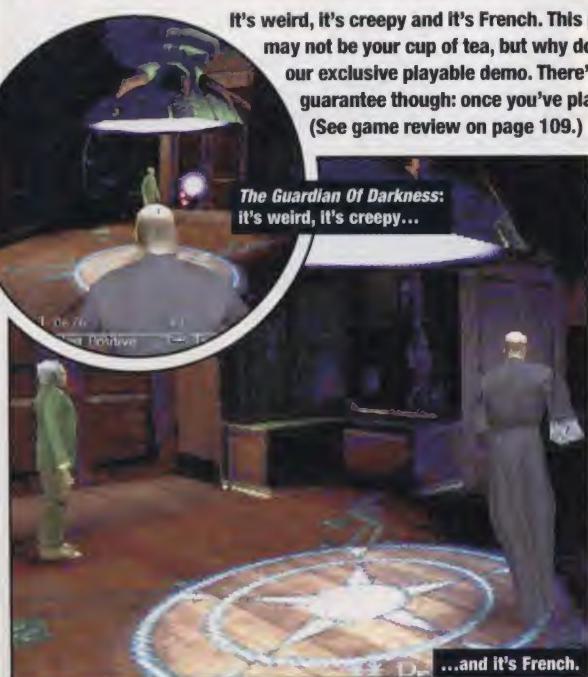
Welcome to the world of oversized guns and all things explosive.

THE GUARDIAN OF DARKNESS

Cryo Interactive

It's weird, it's creepy and it's French. This psychic spook 'em up may or may not be your cup of tea, but why don't you find out by experiencing our exclusive playable demo. There's one thing we can pretty much guarantee though: once you've played it, you'll never forget it. (See game review on page 109.)

The Guardian Of Darkness:
it's weird, it's creepy...



...and it's French.

Controls: Keyboard

CURSORS Forward/back/left/right

NUM - Power down

NUM + Power up

Q Spell warrior

A Spell medium

SHIFT Run/walk

ENTER Take/put

SPACE Open/close

ENTER Give

E Spell menu

I Inventory

F1 Camera mode

F3 Change camera

R Memory

TAB Map

ALT Strafe

Z Spell warrior +

S Spell medium -

CAPS LOCK Run mode

TANKTICS

Gremlin

According to DMA Design, this time-travelling tank titillation was 65 million years in the making.

That's slightly hard to believe, but if part two of our exclusive series of *Tanktics* demos is anything to go by, the chances are that you're going to be spending a similar amount of time battling through the full game when it hits the shops.

Don't believe us? Try out the eight training levels, the despicable sheep-squashing time trial mode and the sample Stone Age level right now. Just stick that shiny round thing into your CD-ROM drive and kiss sociability goodbye.

Controls: Keyboard/mouse

C Cruise control

V Thrust

CTRL Destroy target

*Tanktics*: play it and say goodbye to sociability.



Lander: realistic physics, and gorgeous real-time lighting.

LANDER

Psynopsis

Remember games like *Thrust* on the ZX Spectrum and *Gravity Force* on the Amiga? Well, *Lander* is the contemporary equivalent, boasting realistic physics and gravity, gorgeous real-time lighting, and highly original gameplay. If your machine has 3Dfx compatibility, play this single-level demo to learn more. (See game review on page 100.)

Controls: Mouse/keyboard
MOUSE Pitch/yaw
LEFT MOUSE Thrust
BUTTON C Rotate left
V Rotate right
X Fire main weapon
N Select waypoint
SPACE Activate tractor beam to refuel or pick up objects
A Move camera position up
Z Move camera position down
W If the lander tips over, this rights it



Lander: highly original gameplay.



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEASON 1998-99

Eidos

Whet your appetite for Eidos' timely football release by playing the first half of Manchester Utd Vs Inter Milan at Old Trafford. Oh, glory. (See game review on page 96.)

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad
CURSORS Forward/back/left/right
F Pass
G Shoot



ROLLCAGE

Psynopsis

Rollcage (PCZ #75, 88%) is a chaotic 3Dfx-only racing game from the team who stunned us



WORMS ARMAGEDDON

MicroProse

If you don't know what to expect from *Worms* by now, where the hell have you been? For the uninitiated, *Worms Armageddon* (PCZ #74, 90%) is the latest version of the strategy/action game starring



EDITORIAL

ON THE CD



We couldn't fit this stuff anywhere else, so we've put it here

Tips & Solutions

Our team of dedicated gaming professionals bring you all the latest hints, tips, solutions, guides... basically, anything and everything you could ever want to know about the PC's best games.

Saitek Game Controller

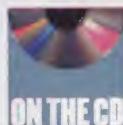
If you're missing drivers for your Saitek controller, you can find the full range right here.

CHAMP MANAGER 2 UPDATE (unofficial)

Update your CM2 data to include the 98/99 season players and teams. Essential input for CM2 junkies.

HOT SHOTS

Spare a moment to experience a rolling demo of the bloodbath that will be known as *Kingpin*, and the slightly more sedate but equally compelling *Diablo 2*.



ADDED EXTRAS

PC ZONE provides the tools and utilities to get your PC through its MoT

DirectX 6.1

Microsoft's latest drivers for most Windows 95/98 games.

EZDe21sk 1.8

Saves the position of your Windows 95/98 desktop shortcuts and folders.

FileView v2.1

Hex/ASCII viewer for binary files.

HyperSnap-DX Pro ver. 3.20.00

Screen-capture utility that can cope with DirectX/Direct 3D and 3Dfx glide modes.

Scitech Display Doctor v6.53

The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

Winzip 7.0

The ultimate zip utility for Windows 9x and Windows NT.

Ameol v2.50

Brand new software for the excellent online service that is CIIX.

Kali95 1.63

Latest version of the client software for playing games over the Internet.

Compuserve 2.6a

Try Compuserve free for a month and get flying on the Internet.

TimeOnline v1.10e

Simple and effective way to track your Net time.

GetRight 3.2

Salvage broken downloads, and much, much more.

ICQ 99a beta v.2.13B

Client software for the best online chat service in the world.

GameSpy 2.08

Finds all the latest servers playing your favourite games.

ClaraNET

Sign up files for ClaraNET. Requires IE4.

AOLpress

Website-building utility that's simple to use and very powerful.

FreeUK

Get online for free. That's right, there's no payment. And there are also no hassles. Try it and see.

with *WipeOut* (PCZ #34, 78%). So if the usual smattering of Grand Prix cars, motorbikes and roadsters fills you with a sense of loathing, this single-circuit, adrenalin-boiling excursion should be right up your street.

Controls: Joystick/keyboard

SPACE Brake

A Face forward

1 Fire 1

2 Fire 2

Q Target car

W Look back

NUM + Zoom in

NUM - Zoom out

ESCAPE Pause

maggots killing each other. It's addictive, colourful and utterly brilliant, and this multi-faceted demo shows why.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

MOUSE Scroll screen

F1 - F10 Weapons

SPACE Fire weapon

ENTER Jump

1 - 5 Fuse length



V-RALLY

Infogrames

The massive PlayStation hit finally makes it to the PC. With six cars and four courses to fiddle about with, you should get a fair idea of what the finished game is capable of – but only if you have a 3Dfx card.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

CURSORS Accelerate/brake/

left/right

LEFT CTRL Handbrake

Z Backtrack

Q Gear up

A Gear down

C Camera

X Rear view





Tomb Raider III: Lara struts her stuff in the South Pacific.

TOMB RAIDER III

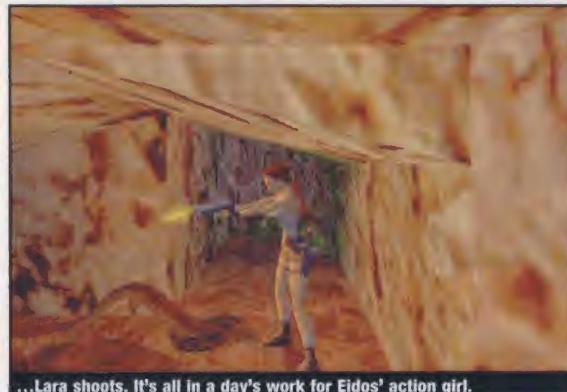
Eidos

Not everybody has succumbed to the buxom charms of Miss Croft, and so, in a final crazed effort to seduce those remaining few, a whole new demo of *Tomb Raider III* has been created. Set in the South Pacific, the lady in question 'washes that man right out of her hair' as she cavorts around the rocks like a pissed-up calendar girl.

Controls: Keyboard/jypad	SHIFT (W/CURSOR KEYS)
CURSORS Forward/back/left/right	Walk/sidestep
CTRL Action	? Sprint
SPACE Draw/holster weapon	INS (KEYPAD 0) Look
ALT Jump	> Duck
END Roll	> (W/CURSOR KEYS) Crawl
< Draw flare	ESC Pause and menu



Lara swings...



...Lara shoots. It's all in a day's work for Eidos' action girl.

NASCAR REVOLUTION

Electronic Arts

Like racing round in circles, do you? Good. Then you'll love this demo. *NASCAR Revolution* is based on the USA's unfathomable love affair with mile-long concrete ovals. Definitely a game for left-handers. (See game review on page 90.)

Controls: Keyboard/joystick
 LEFT/RIGHT CURSORS Steering
 A Accelerate
 Z Brake

Q Shift into reverse
 W Shift into first
 V Change view
 ESC Options menu



NASCAR Revolution: left hand down a bit - constantly.

EXTENDED PLAY

If your games library contains any of these games, then you're about to get more than you bargained for. (Find out more in Extended Play on page 160.)

CARMAGEDDON II

Slap on 24 brand new car skins and confound the rest of the neighbourhood with your appalling taste in exterior design.

MYTH: THE FALLEN LORDS

Extend the original game with an overhead tag builder, six new backgrounds and three new plug-in maps.

MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

Edit *Myth II* to your own tastes with an overhead and pre-game tag builder, and then try out nine spanking new levels. The soul never rests...

SIMCITY 3000

Enables you to update your version of the game to load new landmark packs, and offers three new terrains including Area 51.

PATCHES

Here's a list of all the latest game patches. Look on the CD for a more detailed explanation of what each one actually does

- ARMY MEN 2.0
- BALDUR'S GATE 1.1.4315 (intntl. release)
- BALLS OF STEEL 1.2 (registered version)
- BALLS OF STEEL 1.2 (shareware version)
- BATTLECRUISER 3000 AD 2.00 to 2.05
- BATTLECRUISER 3000 AD 2.03 to 2.04
- BATTLECRUISER 3000 AD 2.04 to 2.04B
- BATTLECRUISER 3000 AD 2.04 to 2.05
- CIVILIZATION II MULTIPLAYER GOLD EDITION 1.2
- CIVILIZATION II ULTIMATE CLASSIC COLLECTION 1.2
- CREATURES II 1.0.38
- DARK VENGEANCE 1.1
- DEER HUNTER II 1.2 TO 1.21 (full install)
- DEER HUNTER II 1.2 TO 1.21 (minimal install)
- DELTA FORCE (revision C)
- GRAND TOURING PATCH #1
- GRAND TOURING PATCH 1.0 (large patch)
- KURT 1.0 to 1.11
- KURT 1.10 to 1.11
- MADDEN NFL 99 2.09
- METAL RAGE - STEEL APOCALYPSE add-on
- MONACO GRAND PRIX RACING SIMULATION II 1.05 (for Direct3D)
- MONACO GRAND PRIX RACING SIMULATION II 1.05 (for Voodoo)
- MOTORACER II 1.34
- MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER 1.1 to 1.2
- NFL FOOTBALL PRO 99 2.0.0.8
- NFL FOOTBALL PRO 99 2.0.0.8 to 2.0.10
- QUAKE II (EAX audio support V3.20)
- QUAKE II MISSION PACK 1 (EAX audio support V3.20)
- QUAKE II MISSION PACK 2 (EAX audio support V3.20)
- QUEST FOR GLORY V 1.1
- RED BARON 3D 1.0.7.8
- S.C.A.R.S (CD fix)
- SETTLERS III 1.20 to 1.27
- SETTLERS III 1.26 to 1.27
- SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTURI 2.0 (beta)
- SIN 1.01 - 1.02 to 1.03
- TEST DRIVE V 1.1
- THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT 1.33
- VIPER RACING 1.1
- WARHAMMER 40,000 CHAOS GATE 1.2
- WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS 1.08

EXTENDED PLAY



Loads of new car skins for *Carmageddon*, maps and mod tools for *Myth*, plus a clutch of exotic buildings and terrains for *SimCity 3000*

WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF



ON THE CD On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 156.

MYTH AND MYTH II

Editors and maps for *The Fallen Lords* and *Soulblighter*



"I don't think we're in Trumpton any more," said Windy.

Now over a year old, Bungee's *Myth: The Fallen Lords* (PCZ #58, 80%) still feels like a whiff of fresh air alongside the growing army of doggy-breathed also-rans. Capable of cross-platform network play, it captivated both Macintosh and Windows players alike with a multimetric 3D universe and sumptuous landscapes.

It isn't without its faults, mind. Gameplay can get tedious because the odds are always stacked heavily against you, with tactics and strategy often going out the window in favour of massed attacks and crossed

fingers. The camera is also a fixed distance from the ground and has a mind of its own – and an extremely psychotic mind at that. Send your troops ten feet forward and the mad cameraman takes that as an invitation to pan round, pull back and film the action from a neighbouring village. That was fixed in *Myth II: Soulblighter* (PCZ #74, 85%), along with a more varied set of maps and missions.

MYTH TOOLS

The following tools compliment the Fear editor supplied with *Soulblighter*

★ **JADE** (*Jade101.zip*) Jade builds new overhead and pre-game tags for new *Myth II: Soulblighter* map files. Overhead tags are scaled-down representations of the entire map seen in the top-right corner of the screen during play; pre-game tags are previews that you see before a game begins. Full instructions are included in the *Jade* archive.

★ **TOPAZ** (*Topaz.zip*) If you want to list the contents of a current *Myth II* map file, Topaz is what you need. It enables you to extract one or more tags to an external file, including those from tag groups that the kosher *Fear* editor can't see.

★ **SAPPHIRE** (*Sapphire.zip*) Sapphire does more or less the same job as Jade, but is for *Myth: The Fallen Lords*. It can generate new textures and pre-game and overhead tags. To get it working properly requires a moderate amount of chanting, stomping, goat sacrifices, waving of juju sticks and what have you, so pay attention.

TEXTURE LIBRARY

(*texturelib.zip*) A collection of six high-quality, copyright-free background JPEGs for use when creating maps and tags. Useful not just for map making, but also for Web pages, presentations and bar mitzvahs.

MYTH MAPS

The following maps are *The Fallen Lords* plug-ins

★ TORPIDINIUM

(*torpidinium.zip*) A large outdoor map with an autumnal theme. Sneak attacks and running away at the first sign of danger are key strategies. The author has included teleporter areas plus Normal, Dark, Assassin and Ghol Riot variations.

★ WIGHTS OF PASSAGE

(*wop1_2.zip*) Based around islands of grass and mud, *Wights Of Passage* really needs five players before it comes alive. Watch out for villagers, as they all seem to have a deadly right hook. ★ **IF I HAD A YETI** (*yetti.zip*) Set in arctic conditions, the tacticians among you should find this map a particular challenge. The cold causes the Dwarven petrol bombs to go out every now and then, and footprints in the snow give away your position. Oh, and watch out for the yeti!

MYTH II MAPS

The following maps are *Soulblighter* plug-ins

★ FOUR KINGDOMS

(*4Kingdoms.zip*) A large map including no fewer than four castles and a sprawling village. Supports six game types,

EXTENDED PLAY BOOKMARKS

OFFICIAL CARMAGEDDON SITE www.carmageddon2.com

PEDESTRIAN PRECINCT www.carpocalypse.com

CRASH'N'BURN SITE www.crimson.force9.co.uk

MYTH MAPS <http://vista.i-craft.net/vista/>

MYTH BADLANDS www.mythcodex.com/badlands

OFFICIAL MYTH SITE www.soulblighter.com

OFFICIAL SIMCITY SITE www.simcity.com

including Capture the Flag, King of the Hill and Assassin. The author clearly knows what he's doing when it comes to making *Myth* maps. Recommended.

★ BLEAKSTONE MARSH

(*bleakston.zip*) A medium-size map that includes all types of game with the exception of Hunting. Also includes a new unit, the charming Warlock of Plague.

★ BLOOD ON THE DANCEFLOOR

(*BotD-V12.zip*) Another *Soulblighter* map from the same stable as *Four Kingdoms*. Supports Body Count, Last Man on the Hill and Steal the Bacon, among others. It's on the small side, so gameplay quickly gets frantic. Lots of deer in the surrounding lands make for excellent target practice.

★ THE GREAT DIVIDE

(*Divide_v1.zip*) A two- or four-team multiplayer map featuring high cliffs, narrow passages, a large valley and lots of sand. Well thought out and excellent fun over a network. Recommended.

★ MOON SHADOW CAVE

(*MSC_v2.zip*) Another *Soulblighter* map designed specifically for multiplayer games. The map includes five variants, including

one called Slugfest where enemy units can be captured and turned into your own troops.

★ PICKET FENCES

(*Picket Fences.zip*) Set around a village, *Picket Fences* includes four variants: Dwarf Riot, Dwarf Fest, Dark Invasion and Light Side. Dwarf Fest is just plain silly, but otherwise Picket Fence is a well-designed map.

★ RIVERBED

(*riverbed.zip*) Comprises five variants, which are Regular, Artillery, 2 Team, Slug (Light) and Slug (Dark). Artillery will amuse fans of *Total Annihilation*'s Big Bertha, as it consists almost entirely of ranged attack units.

★ SMELLS LIKE DEATH

(*Smells_v1.zip*) A substantial indoor arena with three equally addictive variations: Vanilla, Champs 'n' Chumps and Giants.

★ TALLOW ABBEY

(*tallow.zip*) This map introduces a couple of modifications to the standard game units, the most important of which is something called a Vistan Thug, a chunky-looking fellow who's able to lob Dwarven mortar shells. Four variants: Normal, Dark, Slugfest and Dorf Riot.

SIMCITY 3000

★ **New tools, buildings and terrain for the world-famous metropolis maker**

It's only been out for five minutes, but already Maxis' superb *SimCity 3000* (PCZ #74, 92%) has numerous odd bits and pieces available for download. Here we present two new plug-ins and three new textures – simply run the two executable files and then drop the terrains into your \cities\terrains folder and fire up the main game.

★ SC3K PLUG-IN TOOL

(*SC3KAddOnPlug-In.exe*) Gives *SimCity 3000* the ability to load Landmark Packs and new terrains.

★ **LANDMARK PACK #1** (*LandmarkPack1.exe*) Includes three Californian architectural icons: the Palace of Fine Arts, the gorgeous Transamerica Tower, and the Museum of Modern Art.

★ SAN FRANCISCO, MAXISLAND and AREA 51 (*.sct)

Three new textures for your \cities\terrains folder. Before you start dreaming about creating New San Francisco, you need to install the *SC3K Plug-in Tool* (*SC3KAddOnPlug-In.exe*) and *Landmark Pack #1* (*LandmarkPack1.exe*) before you can start designing your own municipality on one of the world's major geological fault lines.



Who needs *SimCity* when you've got Photoshop?

CARMAGEDDON II

• New paint jobs for your Carmageddon cars

Aside from extra splattery guts and realistic tissue, one of the major advancements of *Carmageddon II: Carmageddon* (PCZ #69, 95%) is a polygonal universe. Not only does this make things much crisper than before, it also means that the game's many textures and graphics can be rendered in technicolor Voodoovision and 'stretched' over the surface of objects. Suddenly, changing the appearance of any

car and any pedestrian is easy. All you have to do is come up with a decent flat plan for your paint job (in something like *Photoshop* or *Paint Shop Pro* – feel free to try it yourself), and then let *Carmageddon* do the job of turning it into a 3D vehicle.

The new car skins we've listed here replace existing models and contain their own particular instructions for installation, so make sure you check the relevant readme files before charging in.



CARMAGEDDON SPIRIT

(*Carmageddon_Spirit.zip*) Grunge update for the ubiquitous Eagle. Could do with a wash and wax at the local Esso station, hence only £794.



CHROME

(*Chrome.zip*) Nice aluminium-style rounded corners and graduating textures for the big truck. Still under warranty. £38,500 + VAT.



CLOWNING AROUND

(*Clowning_Around.zip*) Fun new paint job for the VW camper, complete with a big grin on the front grill. £2,000. No time wasters.



COUPE D'ORANGE

(*Coupe_D'Orange.zip*) Another old chop, with rainbow tyres and skull motifs on every panel. One careful owner, full service history. £4,100.



CUSTOM CLASSIC

(*Custom_Classic.zip*) Super modified chop with metal flake paint and flame decals. Six months MoT and road tax. Bargain at only £8,000.



EAGLE CAMO

(*eagle3camo.zip*) Camouflaged Eagle model, except for the yellow tyres and the swirl motif on the bonnet. Owner emigrating to Saturn. £1,300 ono.



GREEN MACHINE

(*Green_Machine.zip*) Bright green Eagle with fluorescent upholstery, e/seats, e/windows, clocking, pas, long MoT. £3,800 ono.



MAJOR DAMAGE

(*major_damage.zip*) Dump truck in olive green camo. Previously owned by Vanessa Feltz. £120,000 incl CD player. AA inspection welcome.



RIVIERA

(*Nrviera.zip*) Looks like an accident in a chicken coop and drives like an Afghan rug. Ideal for the mentally deranged. £900, will consider offers.



SUZIE CREAMCHEESE

(*Suzie_Creamcheese.zip*) Frighten your competitors with a car that looks as though it smells. White wall tyres, leather upholstery. £1,500 ono.



THE RAPIER

(*The_Rapier.zip*) Old-style chop with cyan paintwork and big fat tyres. 17-inch Momo alloys, colour concept leather seats. £3,400 ono.



ULTRA VIOLET

(*Ultra_Violent_Mk2.zip*) Purple Yank tank with Shelby stripes and no street cred. MoT. Sick bag, air bag. £195. No canvassers, please.



BUGGY

(*A_Buggy.zip*) Bright pink buggy with a green dashboard. Ideal for crossing large nuclear wastelands. Free goggles and skulls on a stick. £525 ono.



BLADE

(*Blade.zip*) What Bodie and Doyle would be driving right now if Martin Shaw hadn't become a West End luvvie. Immaculate. £5,000.



BLOODY MARY

(*bloody_mary.zip*) Packard-style roadster with white wall tyres and no windscreen. Low mileage. £1,250. No offers.



BLUE RAT

(*Blue_Rat.zip*) Odd blue thing with a rat motif on the doors. Looks like it's been in an accident before the race starts. £120.50 or p/ex for Rayleigh Grifter.



CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

(*Corporal_Punishment.zip*) Dune buggy thing with camouflage warpaint. Would suit local Gun Club member. £3,150.



COUPE DE VILLAIN

(*Coupe_de_Villain.zip*) An old Ford chop with a funky blue paint job. Thatcham Category 1 alarm and immobiliser. £6,750.



FALCON

(*Falcon.zip*) Orange Eagle with Xenon lamp upgrade. Cigar lighter, Pioneer pull-out stereo, fully loaded. Drive away for £7,100.



GMD XLS SPEED

(*GMD_Xls_Speed.zip*) Monster bus with 9.0 supercharged diesel. Recent paint, genuine mileage, radio cassette. £89,990 + VAT.



SEEING RED

(*Seeing_Red.zip*) Red saloon thing. 89,000 miles. Only one private owner from new, five-speed gearbox, never been smoked in. £1,750.



SLIMER

(*Slimer.zip*) Eagle model with toxic green paintwork and walnut dash. Very tidy inside and out. Would suit extrovert. £550 for private sale.



YELLA FEVER

(*Yella_Fever_Mk4.zip*) Bright yellow chop with integrated blood stains. Absolute stunner, fsh, cooker, sink, fridge. £1,200.



YELLOW MAYHEM

(*Yellow_Mayhem.zip*) Putrid yellow bus, sunroof, company director's car. Janspeed exhaust, tax, MoT. An absolute snip at £2,000.

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THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

DEMIS HASSABIS



In the first of an ongoing series of developer interviews, Paul Presley shoots the breeze with the head of British coders Elixir Studios

Last year, *The Daily Telegraph* said of Demis Hassabis: "At 21, he is small and resembles an elf." Steve Jackson of Lionhead once described him as a cross between Mowgli and Gollum. It is unusual to find someone so young in charge of his own company, even in the games industry, but you shouldn't confuse youth with lack of experience. Hassabis has been around since the early days of Bullfrog, and was the brains behind *Theme Park* (PCZ #17, 93%) at the tender age of 14.

Having moved to Lionhead with Peter Molyneux in July 1996, Hassabis started along his own path just one year later when he formed Elixir Studios. We caught up with him on the eve of their first demonstration to parent company Eldos.

Where do you think PC games are heading over the next five years?

I think we're going to see a leap in the types of game that it's possible to do, mainly in terms of the environments and the complexity of the design. We're still in the learning stages about all this power that we have, and once we learn how to use it to

improve gameplay – something that I don't think we've yet done – then we'll start to see a new breed of games. Also, I expect online gaming to get much, much bigger.

Haven't people been predicting the rise of online gaming for years, though?

I think it was just premature. If you look at things like *Ultima Online* or *Everquest... Origin* are making a huge amount of money, and *Everquest* is probably going to be just as successful. Slowly, we're seeing the online market happen. What it needs now is a killer application. Online gaming is like a new platform, and one that needs a truly innovative game. If and when that game appears, then I think it will really take off.

What type of game might that be?

I think it'll take the form of a really massive game, probably in the strategy or simulation genre. I don't think it'll be a first-person game. More likely it'll be something we've not seen before. The inherent problems with *Ultima Online*-type games are all the usual things – latency problems, bandwidth,

newbie killing. If it had overcome those it would have been ten times better. We need a game that deals with those issues and draws in the vast majority of PC gamers.

What sort of areas should we be focusing on to achieve this?

So far, games haven't really engaged the emotions, not properly. Sony clearly think that's going to happen. They're calling their new chip the 'Emotion Engine', which is a complete PR thing. But we need something along those lines. We have to learn a lot more from the film industry, because they've been engaging the emotions and drawing people in for years. We're going to have to learn some of the techniques they use. We need a game that actually makes you cry. Games haven't had the power to capture your emotions in the same way as films.

Games haven't been considered 'art'.

Exactly. I think that distinction is going to blur as we get more mainstream. We're still a young industry, we're still growing, and we're still running to catch up with the technology.



THE END OF INNOCENCE

The games industry has changed significantly since Hassabis first started, and it continues to do so. Gone are the days of bedroom programmers and original thought – or so it often seems. Ever since the money men arrived on the scene, the industry has arguably been heading down a spiral of creative decay. And things can only get worse. Or at least that's many people's view.

Hassabis is constantly saying he's going for original concepts and ground-breaking designs in games. How will the new age of technology fit into this approach?

What effect will the new breed of consoles have? They're very impressive machines, technically, but it's going to come down to the games. The PlayStation pushed gaming into an area where it had never been before. It's truly mainstream now, aligned with music and club culture. If you're 20 to 30 now, you've probably got a PlayStation as well as a video and a TV and a stereo. It's become part and parcel. Sony see PlayStation 2 as a definite lifestyle accessory.

How will that affect the types of games that companies will produce?

We'll see a lot more companies producing not particularly great or original games, but ones that will make money. There will be more film licences and more outfits like EA Sports, who are basically translating every sport they can find and producing several really polished versions. We'll see more

What was the last really original game you saw? [Thinks]... *Parappa The Rapper* was pretty original – a wacky idea that was very successful.

Not many people seem to remember IBM's *Quest For Fame*, which came out before *Parappa*. That was a very similar sort of thing – playing air guitar in time to Aerosmith.

“Slowly, we’re seeing the online market happen. What we need now is a killer application”

DEMIS HASSABIS, ELIXIR STUDIOS

franchises like the *Tomb Raider* thing, with a new version every year. *Final Fantasy VIII* is a good example – two million pre-orders in Japan.

We’re becoming increasingly commercialised?
Well, the games market is maturing. It's what, 20 years old now? It's not a baby any more. There's just too much money involved for people to treat it like they did ten years ago. It has been a victim of its own success.

Really? I hadn't heard of that. *Parappa* had the characters, though, and it struck me at the time as being really original. But everything's taken from something else. You can't create in a vacuum.

What one thing would you most like to change about the games industry if you could?
The way it's perceived. It's not taken very seriously, certainly not by academia. Universities still see the games industry as a second-rate thing, not





The Elixir team: signed by Eidos for 'untold' sums of money. No wonder they look smug.



Great computer games don't just make themselves, you know. And look, here's proof.



Demis outside Elixir Studios in 'fashionable' Camden, London.



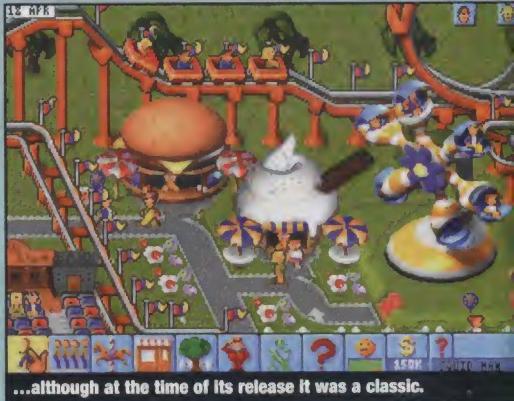
Computer genius, or a young man with more money than sense? Only time will tell.



Theme Park was the first big game Demis worked on...



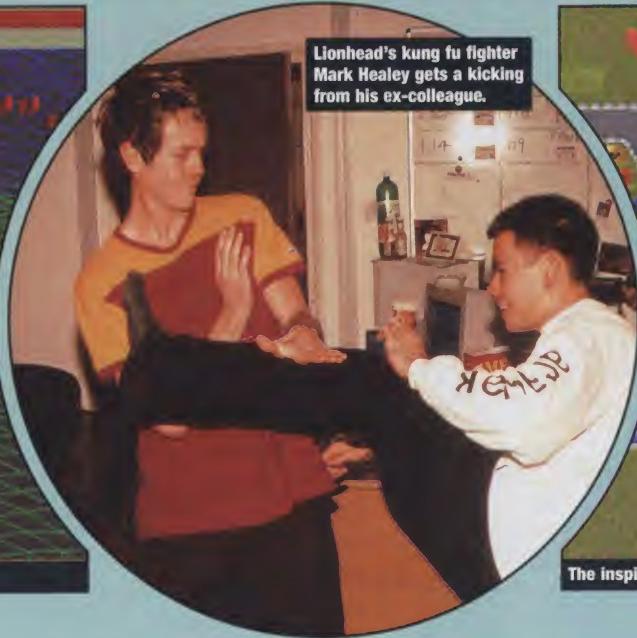
...but as you can see it looks a bit dated now...



...although at the time of its release it was a classic.



Black & White: Demis gave it all up to go it alone.



Lionhead's kung fu fighter Mark Healey gets a kicking from his ex-colleague.



The inspiration for Rollercoaster Tycoon? We think so.

something that's intellectually challenging or worthwhile. That's just wrong. Games are pushing graphics and technology and physics. It'll change as we become more mainstream.

THEME PARK WARS

Hassabis first made his name with *Theme Park*, co-designed with Peter Molyneux. With the recent release of Chris Sawyer's *Rollercoaster Tycoon* (PCZ #75, 87%), and the imminent *Theme Park* sequel from Bullfrog, we wondered how he felt about seeing his 'baby' in the hands of others.

Okay, let's get personal. What has been the worst moment of your career?

I think it was right after I left Lionhead and was thinking that maybe I'd made the wrong decision.

You didn't go straight into Elixir from Lionhead? No, the reason I left was to form Elixir, but it didn't get started until about five months afterwards, it was a long slog to get it all up and running. I was contacting venture capitalists and getting nothing back from them - they don't understand the games industry the way the US investors do. There was just a huge amount of work to do and I couldn't see how it would happen. That was definitely a moment of crisis. Maybe not my worst moment, but definitely the scariest.

Presumably your best moment was when it all eventually clicked?

Well, actually I think my finest moment was when *Theme Park* became a success. That was the kind of feeling that made me want to start Elixir. That's the feeling I want to get again. It's a bit like a drug.

When did you know that *Theme Park* had actually 'made it'?

We knew it would be a good game after about two months, as Peter [Molyneux] and I were playing against each other for about the thousandth time. We were just coding it all day, then playing it all night, then coding it again and playing it again...

There's some competition now. Have you seen *Rollercoaster Tycoon* yet?

Actually, I bought it yesterday.

Financing the enemy?

I wanted to check it out. I think it's very slick, but I don't think it's a huge design leap or anything. Graphically it's a lot better, and it hasn't made some of the mistakes that we made. Chris [Sawyer] is a good designer, but they could have made it more original. It felt a bit like *Theme Park Plus*. If I could re-do *Theme Park* I'd definitely put in more about rollercoasters.

And then there's Bullfrog, of course. Wouldn't you like to have done *Theme Park 2* yourself? I'd love to have done it. I had a design for it and everything. There's just too much publisher politics there. I'd love to have done it with Peter. We had plenty of ideas, but from what I've heard it seems to be going down a slightly different route. It sounds quite good, and it'll be enough to beat *Rollercoaster Tycoon*, but I don't think it's going to go as far as I would have wanted to take it. It sounds like *Theme Park Plus Plus*.

Why not start your own theme park simulation franchise?

[Laughs] It's an idea. But, you know, in a way life's



Young, successful... and rich. Bastard.

too short. If you're going to put two or three years of work into a game, you're better off doing something really impressive. You can't really get that with a rip-off.

MOLYNEUX'S BURNT PINEAPPLE

The obvious direction to go from here is towards Lionhead. Hassabis moved to Molyneux's set-up right from the start and, for a time, was one of the key people working on *Black & White*.

An entry in Steve Jackson's *Lionhead Diaries* hinted at the depth of Hassabis's work on the game: "A car blows up in the game, a fragment of metal crashes through a nearby window, the window shatters, a shard of glass flies off towards a tree and hits a leaf, which then flutters to the ground."

As physics engines go, this one sounded above and beyond anything we'd seen so far.

The worrying thing was that Hassabis's departure from Molyneux's gang was never mentioned in the

"We have to learn a lot more from the film industry. We need a game that actually makes you cry"

DEMIS HASSABIS, ELIXIR STUDIOS

Dairies. Maybe there will be an avalanche of bitterness and resentment if the subject is broached. But let's plough on regardless.

What about *Black & White*? How will the game fare without you?

I think it will be a different game. It'll still be great, with or without me. Lionhead are so good as a team that one person won't make or break the game. I've seen some design things, and I do think I would have done things differently. I can't really go into it though. Not to say it'll be better or worse, just that it'll be different.

You were working on a pretty major physics engine. How do you see it surviving?

It's hard to say. I was working on a lot of test bed stuff - early code and libraries - so I'd be surprised if much was left in, certainly in its original form. It will have been built upon or replaced.

What is life at Lionhead really like?

Steve's Diaries give a pretty good impression of what it's like there. It's pretty relaxed, and there's a sense that, with Peter, they can almost do no wrong. There are certainly no money worries or anything. You want a piece of equipment, it's there. They're a small developer with a big developer's budget, which is great. They get a lot of creative

freedom with regard to their publisher, so it's a really good atmosphere.

I've heard that Peter Molyneux would play a lot of pranks on you.

Who told you about that?

We do our research.

Well, yeah, it just goes back to our Bullfrog days. Peter and I are both insomniacs, and we'd always be there until the small hours of the morning, so we often needed to just chill out and stop things getting too intense. There was this one thing...

What one thing?

Well, Peter smokes a lot and... well, as you can see with my hair, it's gone sort of pineapple-like at the back. It all sticks up. There's nothing I can do about it. One day, I'm sitting there coding, and Peter just decides to burn off the pineapple. I don't think he intended to set my hair on fire but... I didn't find it that amusing, but everyone else seemed to think it was hilarious.

How does life at Elixir compare to life at Lionhead?

We normally have one huge, company-wide argument per day, which stops everyone working for about half an hour. It's usually about philosophy or the merits of religion, or some mad physics discussion, like how telekinesis could work. I reckoned that maybe our minds could control gravitons, but Tim, our resident physicist, rubbish that idea.

Weighty issues.

The problem is that everyone here is probably an expert in some academic area or another, so usually you can't get away with too much bullshit.

The other thing we argue about is sport. For instance, Joe [McDonagh, designer] is a big fan of Evander Holyfield and I'm a big fan of Lennox Lewis, so we had a huge discussion about that. Or it'll be something like whether Bruce Lee could have beaten Muhammad Ali.

Do you think he could?

I reckon Bruce Lee would kill him. But Joe used to box for Oxford, and he reckons Ali would definitely have had a chance.

How about Elixir versus Lionhead in a fight?

A proper fight? I think we'd win easily, although there are some hard people at Lionhead.

One of them does karate, doesn't he?

That'll be Mark Healey [Lionhead artist]. It's kung fu, but he's only a beginner at it. We've got Tim Clarke [head of R&D], who's a British under-23 powerlifter. He can bench-press 200 kilos. And there's Joe, of course, who boxed for Oxford against Cambridge. I reckon we could hold our own.

That puts the ball in Lionhead's court, I guess...

Elixir are in an interesting place right now. In many ways their office shows all the signs of a fresh, new company - storage boxes and construction work everywhere - but their attitude is that of an experienced team who have been through it all before. The major challenge they face now is in convincing Eldos that they know what they're doing. It's a huge investment, but Hassabis seems confident that he's justifying it. The rest of us will know soon enough whether he's right. **PCZ**

COMPUTER SHOPPER

www.computershopper.co.uk

A screenshot of the Computer Shopper website's news section. The page features a banner at the top with the text "DODGE DAKOTA" and "DODGE RAM" on either side of a central graphic. Below the banner, there's a large headline "SUVs Rule" with a sub-headline "SUVs rule the market, but what about the future?". To the right of the main content area, there's a sidebar titled "DODGE RAM" with a sub-section "Dodge Ram News". The main content area contains several news articles with headlines like "Authorizes Catch-22 Visa for Car Shoppers", "Adidas Acquires Web Site Creation Line With Buy-out of Go2Net", "Amaron Eyes Recovery of \$275 million in Q4", "GSP Police Could Plague Police on 22 August", and "Authorizes Catch-22 Visa for Car Shoppers". Each article has a brief summary and a link to the full story.

A screenshot of the Computer Shopper website. The header features the magazine's name in large, bold letters, followed by a search bar and navigation links for 'HOME', 'TOP 10', 'REVIEWS', 'ARTICLES', 'FORUMS', 'GAMES', 'PRIVACY', and 'CONTACT'. A red banner across the top right reads 'BROWSE SEARCH' and 'TOP 10'. Below the header, a sidebar on the left lists categories like 'COMPUTER', 'MONITOR', 'KEYBOARD', 'MOUSE', 'FIREWALL', 'GRAPHICS CARD', 'PROCESSOR', 'MEMORY', 'POWER SUPPLY', 'COOLING', and 'CASE'. The main content area is titled 'REVIEWS' with a sub-section 'PORTABLES'. It contains reviews for various devices: 'i-Scan Thermometer 7000', 'ACU-Extreme', 'ACU-Dimmer', 'ACU-Powerline 3', 'Adaptive Technology Ready TFT', 'AEG AP-1000', 'AEG AP-1000', 'AEG AP-1000', 'AEG AP-1000', 'AEG AP-1000', 'AEG AP-1000', and 'AEG AP-1000'. To the right, there's a large image of an i-Phone with its cable attached, and a box labeled 'i-Scan Power 10'. A sidebar on the right says 'GET THE LATEST CAR' and 'THE BIG SURVEY CAR'.

News: Daily Technology news at your fingertips

Reviews: Over 2000 hardware and software products reviewed and rated

WIN!: Top prizes from Computer Shopper

THE UK'S BEST SELLING I.T. MAGAZINE - ON LINE

The image shows the front cover of the August 1997 issue of Computer Shopper magazine. The title 'COMPUTER SHOPPER' is prominently displayed at the top in large, bold, white letters against a black background. Below the title, there's a large photograph of a Fujifilm MX-500 digital camera. To the left of the camera, there's a headline 'TIME 400-2 TIME MACHINE' with the subtext 'a lot of PC for the money'. Further down the left side, there's another headline 'Star Trek: Starship Creator Trek Heaven!' with the subtext 'Edited by Hugh Poynton'. On the right side of the cover, there's a vertical column of news headlines. At the very bottom, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Auto Express', 'Computer Buyer', 'Hi-Fi Choice', 'Home Entertainment', 'MacUser', 'Maxim', 'PC Pro', 'PC Zone', and 'Stuff'.

FEATURING

- News
 - Reviews
 - Classifieds
 - Competition
 - Feedback
 - Chat

CHAT

Your technical
questions
answered

THE LIONHEAD DIARIES



Continuing our insider's view of the making of *Black And White*, the first game from new developers Lionhead

WORDS Steve Jackson

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT, THE FUTURE IS...?

One of the most difficult decisions a developer has to make is: which platforms do you choose for your next project? It's a commitment which must be made 18-24 months before a game is completed, and getting it right in terms of technical specifications and budgets can be vital to a project's success. Or to a developer's survival, even. Obviously Lionhead's first priority is to finish *Black & White*. No one knows where the market will be in two years' time – the PC will still be around, but what specs do you design for? P700 minimum, perhaps? And with which graphics and sound cards?

These days you have to be thinking console too, as it will become more and more difficult for companies like Lionhead who pioneer new technologies to develop original games just on the PC. And with the next-generation consoles emerging, that's a *really* tough decision. Sega's Dreamcast has been launched in Japan, the number of PlayStation owners around the world is phenomenal, and its successor the PSX2 has just been announced – but how many PSX2 owners will there be in 2001 when your next game comes out? And will the N64 be around in two years' time, or will a new machine (the N2000?) have appeared? Then there's the mysterious 'Project X'...

I guess I ought to explain the significance of consoles. To illustrate the point, let's take a brief detour and consider the implications of the vastly improved 'polygon count' specs quoted by these new machines.

Characters in 3D games are created using a wireframe mesh comprising a large number of polygon shapes, all bound together in virtual 3D space. Each time a new animation frame is displayed on the screen, the processor has to calculate the new position of every single polygon, and fill each one with an art 'texture' to create the final image. This process is repeated 30-50 times every second to create the illusion of movement.

Obviously, the more polygons used to create a character, the more realistic the character looks on-screen. The PlayStation can handle less than a million polygons per second, but the initial specs for the PSX2 boast 66 million – a truly terrifying prospect. There's no shortcut to fully exploiting these greatly enhanced graphics capabilities: artists must simply put many, many more hours of work into every single character and every 3D object.

Which platforms do you choose for your next project? Getting it right can be vital to a developer's survival

On a macro scale, this means that games on the new consoles and future computers will look truly awesome – just imagine playing *Toy Story* in real time. They will do all sorts of things that could never be done before, and this level of quality will simply become the norm for all videogames.

But they will also cost an absolute fortune to develop. And since the retail price of games is being forced down rather than up, these increased development costs mean games simply have to sell more copies before even beginning to make any profit – and the publisher only starts paying royalties after you've passed that break-even point. A few years ago, a game might have been able to break

even on its modest development costs with sales of 100,000 units, but these technological advances are upping the ante. The time is rapidly approaching when a game will need sales of a million units – just to cover its costs!

Hence the reason console development becomes crucial. Though figures of 200-odd million PCs in homes around the world might sound impressive, most of these are owned by families and casual users who never buy full-price games. In reality very few PC games sell a million units. On the other hand, console owners bought their machines for one reason – to play games. With 50 million PlayStations in circulation, a successful title like *Final Fantasy* or *Tomb Raider* can sell two to five million copies and make big money. However, the same production budget for a title developed only for PC – and a similar degree of success, relatively speaking – is a completely different animal. The game may be critically acclaimed, but the actual sales figures are likely to see financial directors throwing themselves out of office windows like lemmings.

So, if you were in our shoes, how would you be planning your next three years' production? Would you: a) take a guess at what sort of spec the average PC owner might have in two to three years' time; b) plan a hugely risky megabucks production for the PSX2; c) go for the Dreamcast with its advantages of easy porting from the PC; d) hold on until you find out what Nintendo are planning, or even e) take a 'shit-or-bust' punt on a new system?

Not an easy one, huh?

As well as being a director of start-up games developer Lionhead, Steve Jackson is co-founder of Games Workshop, author of Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks, and a columnist for The Daily Telegraph.

The next instalment follows in our July issue, on sale Thursday 3 June.



Black & White is being developed for the PC – but what of future Lionhead games?



Artist Christian Bravery working in 3D Studio Max on polygonal mesh for a humanoid creature from *Black & White*.



Board Meeting at 10,000 metres. Steve Jackson, Peter Molyneux and Mark Webley discuss Lionhead's future.

SICK NOTES



Letters, letters, everywhere, and not a lot to think: welcome once again to Sick Notes, the letters page that makes *Points Of View* look like a load of rubbish. Which it is anyway

★ CHEWING ON WORDS Charlie Brooker

SICK NOTES WANTS YOUR LETTERS

Sick Notes wants your letters! And we still want to know what you reckon are the biggest shithole towns in the country (see *Worst Town In Britain*). By the way, *Worst Band In The World* has now been canned due to lack of imagination.

WRITE TO Sick Notes, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk
With the subject heading 'Sick Notes'

THE DOPE SHOW

Ever since we lambasted Marilyn Manson in an earlier edition of Sick Notes, outraged fans of the band have been writing in to complain...

What the f*** are you saying about Marilyn Manson? They are a great band, as are Iron Maiden. I don't understand why the hell you keep kicking the hell out of bands like these and then use their song titles as headlines for your articles. I love Marilyn Manson, Iron Maiden and PC ZONE. I can't be that wrong, can I?

André Henriques, Portugal

★ Do you want to tell him, or shall I?

Marilyn Manson might be considered 'fake', but they are one of the most entertaining live bands in the world. You

“Chas and Dave are the most entertaining live band in the world. And they're 4-REAL”

write for a games mag. Games are the most entertaining medium around, but each one is as 'fake' as Marilyn Manson. Unless, of course, you think they are real, in which case your stupidity has lost you the argument by default.

Skoffin

★ Chas and Dave are, without question, the most

entertaining live band in the whole world. And they're 4-REAL, man.

NO COMMENT

How exactly does an individual define 'stupid'? You always seem to have people writing in and criticising others for being stupid, and if that isn't the case then you're attacking the writers themselves for being stupid.

Just because a person can't write witty letters or create exciting games doesn't make them stupid. After all, talent can come in many different forms and can't always be measured by IQ.

For instance, when was the last time you rebuilt a car engine, or painted a beautiful landscape in watercolours? I doubt you ever have, but this doesn't make you stupid, does it? All these things can be done and you don't even have to know how to read or write.

So next time somebody writes in and their letter has poor spelling or grammar, or they seem to be speaking BS because they don't know the subject matter well enough, give them a break. They may be more gifted than you by far.

Chris Robinson, Southampton

★ Hmm... Try this next letter then, printed verbatim.

I think its great in shootem ups like half life that you can wonder around and shatter

some ones skull with a crow bar. When Doom first came out I did nothing but wander around punching poor imp basterds to death or if I could find the chain saw make them into dog food. But I hoped in half life you could have a knife or some thing to throw at the enemy so you can go and prise it out of there skull. Or be able

to creep up behind people and strangle the sod then break there neck. Tell the gies who make kingpin to put a metal chain in as a weapon so you can lob it at some poor bastard.

'Basgallop', name and address withheld

A MAN PRETENDING TO BE A WOMAN WRITES

I have a problem that I hope you can help me with. In an attempt to get my boyfriend to take his eyes off his monitor and pay some attention to me, I've decided to get a tattoo. The question is: what of, and where? Right now I'm torn between a rocket launcher on my breasts or a BFG on my butt. Any help you could give me with this would be greatly appreciated.

Kitten

★ How about an anus in the middle of your face?

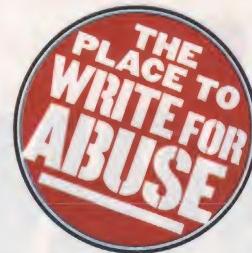
WORST TOWN IN BRITAIN

Your entries for the Worst Town In Britain are still flooding in... and we want more. We can compile an entire guide book at this rate, so keep 'em coming.

I was recently sent to Watford for a training course, and it's the most soul-destroying town I've ever had the misfortune to clap eyes upon. The whole place is one undifferentiated lump of grey concrete, carved into a maze of twisted streets, with a bunch of chain stores sprinkled on top.

Anon

Southampton. Why anyone would want to live in a city with no redeeming features apart from shiny new road signs is beyond me. It's full of arse-faced w**kers whose only ambition is to see their shite football team stay in the Premiership. The best resident



is the scum that floats on top of the water in the harbour. A message to the Government: just turn it into a giant landfill site or nuclear waste dump or something - after the rest of the world's scum moves in.

F Barron

no matter what time of year it is. And if you plan on going there any time after 6pm, you may as well dig your own grave beforehand, because you're bound to be chased by some knife-wielding psycho.

P Sorvino

Worst town: Barnsley. There can be no doubt about this. I don't have to explain why, do I? It's a complete hell hole, and when I left I swore I'd never go back.

A Shepherd

LOSER OF THE MONTH

You can be a loser and also a winner – of £50

I WANNA HAVE SEX ON THE BEACH

I've got a game idea. You sit on the beach with your girlfriend and have sex with her. You can do different moves, like rolling over and stuff. You also have a computer player that is against you and a crowd which decides who does the best sex. And you face lots of people and have lots of sex and it goes on forever.

A Lavranos, Australia

★ Is there a bonus round where you all have to gather round a biscuit? Thought not. It's a rubbish game idea anyway. Still, it reminds me of something I read in *The Encyclopaedia Of Unusual Sex Practices* (Abacus Books, 1995). The entry for necrophilia notes that: "The Sueheli and Arabian fishermen along the coast of Africa, until a hundred years ago, believed that unless they had anal sex with the seacows they netted, or that had washed up dead, they would be dragged out to sea the next day and drowned by the seacow's dead sister."

Thought that was worth sharing. It's a great book, by the way. Available from all good bookshops, price £12.99 (ISBN 0-349-10676-2).



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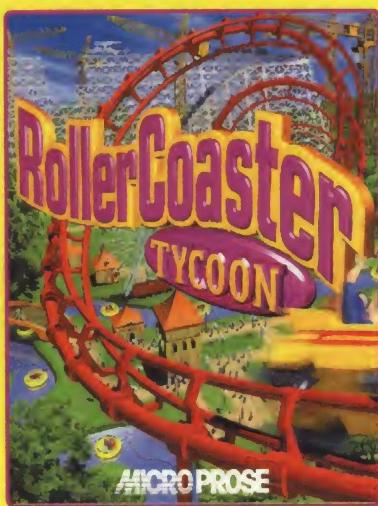
I can't believe it, I researched for months to get the ultimate Corkscrew. On the first ride, 2 people died of shock, and the other 32 threw up their hamburgers!

In that case, you'll have to lower the price, rename the ride and do a recruitment drive for more cleaners.



With Roller Coaster Tycoon, building the biggest, scariest rides ever experienced is only just the beginning. You've then got to manage the park as a successful, profit-making business; hire and fire staff, research new rides, set prices, advertise, monitor your customers' moods ... Sounds fun?

Sounds like there could be a Roller Coaster Tycoon in you itching to get out.



Roller Coaster Tycoon - a shrewd investment in long-term amusement.



DEMO AVAILABLE ON: www.rollercoastertycoon.com

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MICRO PROSE